



# TALKING AT RANDOM



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*By*

DOUGLAS WOODRUFF

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*To*  
PETER LUNN  
*Defending Malta.*



## THE STATISTICAL KNOWLEDGE OF GOD.

### A POEM.

"Does prayer have any external effect such as can be measured by statistical methods? Is the husband of a loving and prayerful wife a 'better life,' from the point of view of life insurance, than a man who has no Christian relatives anxious for the prolongation of his existence? These are questions which a man may surely ask without impropriety, and they are questions which a statistical enquiry alone could answer."

(*Dean Inge at the Modern Churchman's Congress, 1936*).

The Modern Churchman planned a test :  
"Let's see if saying prayers is best,  
Or can we let such labour rest ? "

His very reverend knee he bends  
Before his scientific friends,  
For on their word his law depends.

"O please provide for us some sick  
And watch if prayer will do the trick ;  
Take pains with the arithmetic.

"See who gets better, who gets worse,  
Whose husbands lengthy prayers rehearse,  
And whose remain extremely terse.

"Were prayer and fasting ever meant ?  
Our fathers saw that fasting went.  
Can prayer survive experiment ?

"Such pastimes suited Bedouin tents,  
But they have very little sense  
In the modern villa residence,

"And clergy, praying by mistake,  
Waste breath ordained, this point to make :  
How much true Christians must forsake.

"Denial is the Christian's weeds,  
Not self-denial of real needs,  
But firm denials of the creeds.

"When our statistics see the sun,  
The prayer wheels will no more be spun  
The hassock-maker's day is done."

The Modern Churchmen's test took place  
They backed their fancies for the race,  
And Double-entry checked up Grace.

\* \* \* \* \*

Alas, that in the heavenly courts  
The tests gave rise to different thoughts ;  
Cherubic pouts, seraphic snorts.

"They think to measure to a hair  
What loads, and when and why and where  
The Everlasting Arms will bear.

"And Cambridge men shall ascertain  
Mechanically the point of strain,  
And when to press and when refrain.

"With compass and dividers neat  
They seek the line, in yards and feet,  
Where Mercy and where Justice meet.

"They plot their graphs and ink their chart  
To find how fervent human hearts  
Must be, before the answering starts.

"By well-checked facts they hope to tell  
What moderate strength will ring the bell  
What strength refunds the coin as well.

"Their Lord and God they much demean  
With their statistical machine ;  
His Will rides free of what has been.

"Not in their observation caught,  
His Yeas and Nays transcend their thought  
And their experiment is naught."

Angelic circles, it is said,  
Find Modern Churchmen underbred.

I see that an American jeweller's catalogue is offering a new novelty—gold clips for fastening back the ears of spaniels so that they shall not get in their way while they are enjoying their dinners. A further novelty for which there might be a large market would be ear-flaps for dogs, whenever it was desired to talk about them in their presence without resorting to laborious expedients, like saying it in French, as people so commonly do to-day. It is only a matter of time before really sharp and suspicious dogs learn French as well as English, especially if they are dogs of mixed blood, as so many dogs are, and therefore born with a gift for languages. Human beings do not go in much for ear-flaps, in spite of Herbert Spencer's firm example. In his later years, if the conversation bored him he would quietly loosen the straps and fasten the ear-flaps down over each ear, so that he could go on thinking in peace. Messrs. Vanheems might put on the market, for the senior clergy, a skull-cap with ear-pieces attached.

#### SLEEP COMES INTO ITS OWN.

All who have ever slept and have pleasant memories of their old friend Morpheus, the close companion of their infancy and onwards, will be glad to hear the good news that sleep has, at long last, made some really influential friends. The National Association of Head Teachers, representing ten thousand wise unnodding heads, have decided to approach the Ministry of Health, as the department responsible for sleep, and to secure a Government grant for more sleep for children who stay up too late. It is a wholesome change, because "sleepy head" used to be a term of reproach common on pedagogic lips. But the truth probably is that on second thought the wiser teachers, those who have risen by sheer merit to be head teachers, think that sleep is after all better than lessons or playing the fool, the other alternatives of childhood. It is cheap and requires no very costly apparatus; and the child who learns early to sleep without snoring has learnt the first duty of what President Roosevelt would call "the good neighbour."

#### CHRISTIANS, DON'T TROUBLE TO AWAKE.

National fitness means more devotion to sport, and since it is dull if we all do the same thing, many an under-rated sport can now come into its own. Chief among the lesser sports, but with great attractions of its own, is sleep-walking, for which monastic cloisters are peculiarly well adapted. A new sleep-walking record has just been set up by an Indian, Pandit Ramrakha, who has walked sixteen miles in his sleep, in India. Herr Hitler's remark, that he acts with the certainty of a somnambulist, should do much

for the prestige of the sport. It is an invaluable excuse for shop-lifters to say they are asleep, when invited to step into the manager's room.

#### EARLY TO BED AND LATE TO RISE.

Seventeenth-century England had its *Answers* long before Lord Northcliffe, and I treasure some three or four volumes of the old *Atbenian Mercury*, a paper wholly given over to questions and answers, where we can read what sort of things worried our ancestors under William and Mary. On early rising this paper took a view in opposition to the copy-books, saying :—

“Though it be a kind of recession from the common opinion, to prefer going to bed and rising late—yet is it to be noted that most persons of great position and the more judicious sort, observing that course of life are of that judgment, since that to approve a thing is to do it. Now we see that all the great Lords and Ladies about the Court, the most refined spirits and such as are able to judge of all things, nay, most men who have anything more than an ordinary burden of affairs, for the most part go to bed late and rise late (the more quickly does time slip away). They therefore are to be thought the happiest who if they had their own wills would go to bed latest ; not only for that reason which made a certain King of this part of the world say that he would be King as long as he could, insomuch as when he slept there was no difference between him and the meanest of his subjects.”

This was just before the great John Locke began to make Englishmen go in for the cold morning tub and regular daily habits, and the rest of the Englishman's framework of the good life.

#### PRAISE OF ELEPHANTS.

Mr. Frank Melland, who knows African wild life as well as any man, has been paying a handsome general tribute to elephants as the most lovable animals in Africa. He says, “If they had not been so mercilessly hunted, I believe they would have been perfectly friendly to man. The majority have delightful natures, and they are sociable, companionable animals, with a strong love of family. It is not their fault that they come to look upon man as their enemy, the only one they have.” I have often wondered why more people in England do not keep an elephant instead of a motor car. The cost is about the same, £2 a week for hay, instead of £1 a week for petrol, etc., and elephants do not depreciate, but are rather better after a hundred years, which has not yet been said of any car, however boastful its maker ; and there is no question of fashion making people ashamed of last year's model.

Having been sent a copy of the New Testament by a solicitous stranger, instead of replying hastily that I know the work, I have copied out a fine tribute to the Scriptures, paid by St. Thomas More, where he writes : "Holy Scripture is the highest and the best learning that any man can have, if one take the right way in the learning. It is, as a good holy Saint saith, so marvellously tempered, that a mouse may wade therein and an elephant be drowned therein." It is like a swimming bath with deep and shallow ends.

#### LORD HALIFAX AND AN INDIAN.

At the time when Lord Halifax was being changed from Mr. Wood of the Ministry of Agriculture into Lord Irwin, the Viceroy, I remember hearing two Indian students in the hall of Lincoln's Inn. One was using Lord Halifax's career to explain to the other what a wonderful thing Democracy is, "because under it," he said, "anybody can become anything." His eyes gleamed, and the words flowed in a rapid, eager cascade as he expounded : "take, for instance, the case of this man Irwin. He is now the ruler of three hundred millions of people, but what was he before?—A nobody, a person of no account, a gardener."

But the Ministry of Agriculture in a half-century or so of troubled life has grown well used to derogation. What it has not grown used to is the idea that, sooner or later, it will have to cease to tack on to its name "and Fisheries," or give more of its mind to fish, for fishermen feel very strongly that they are always expected to play second fiddle in Whitehall to farmers, people of whom they know and care little, beyond despising them for only reaping what they sow.

#### HOW TO SUCCEED.

Some nice books have reached me from the U.S.A., called *How to be a Convincing Talker and a Charming Conversationalist*. They are highly practical volumes, so practical that they assume that a talk or a conversation to be worth while should end in a sale on the spot. But they have counsel for us all. One rule is, not to put your face within three feet of the person you are talking to, and another is, not to tap him, except perhaps with a pencil, and then lightly. But there is a blunt chapter on small talk, which says : "Let the company decide by the degree of its interest, and by requests to you to go on, how much detail it wants to hear about your doings. Unless such requests are definitely made, don't go on." Perhaps that is how the tradition of the strong, silent Englishman began in the nineteenth century. Men came home from so many different parts of the world, and did not want to hear about each other.



## EASTERN MYSTICISM.

There is some good advice in this book about jokes. Although the pun "helps to make incidental merriment" it needs watching. "The pun which veers upon the doubtful," says my book, "is one such as this : Says the girl to her boy friend while in the country : 'I love to hear the trees whisper,' Replies the boy friend : 'Yes, and I love to hear the grass moan.'" Agreed. Later on, the book says : "Even the Chinese can be good at repartee." But the most striking part of the book is where the author writes about the general cowardice in the choice of topics. Women in particular are afraid that they will not shine if the talk leaves trivialities." Margery Wilson, after studying ten thousand women (!), lists fifteen subjects which they can, and will, discuss :

Home	Men	Clothes
Beauty Culture	Politics	Family
Two Sports	Books	Crime
Movies, Stage	Love	Bargains
Weight-reduction	Marriage	Money

It does not look so narrow. But the general level is no more than "monkey chatter," by which my author understands gossip and dirty stories, weather, people, news, sport. He writes that when people try to lift the level by bringing in books and plays, somehow no one is very pleased, as Rogers, of London, in his *Technique of Conversation*, agrees. For my part, I find the Popes very good dinner table topics, always granted that you meet a Protestant who has heard of any one of them but Alexander VI. Sometimes they say : "Wasn't there a Gregory ?" They always know there was an Alexander. If the old reputed Eastern form of examination "Write down everything you know," were practised here, I think it would dawn on Englishmen how the few clear historical impressions they take away from their childhood bear testimony to the way they are indoctrinated early against the Church. However little else they know, they all know about bad Popes, Smithfield fires, and the Spanish Inquisition. If much more recent cruelties, like Norfolk Island, the hulks, the incredible floggings, by the hundreds of lashes in the Army and Navy, things which only ceased in the last century, had been connected with the Church and not with the State, they would have been firmly impressed on every infant mind.

## EASTERN MYSTICISM.

"But fate, itself, works by leaps and starts and one never knows whither Nemesis will lead if we keep on provoking it."—Rabindranath Tagore.

There is a book which swept America, called *How to Win Friends and Influence People*, which was serialized in the *News Review*. The great rule for popularity, surprising as it may seem, is to be genuinely interested in other people, but you have to keep it up, and influence on these terms will lose much of its attractiveness for many diligent students. One particular tip is to remember that no sound is so sweet to the ordinary person as his or her own name. The story is told of Andrew Carnegie, who discovered this early in life. He kept a lot of rabbits, and he persuaded the boys of his Scottish village to go pulling up dandelions and roots to feed the rabbits, not by promising them a young rabbit each, but by promising to name a rabbit after them.

#### THE THEOLOGY OF DICE.

Not all who are fond of shooting craps, or even indulging on great feasts, in a round or two of Ludo or a race game, know what a very murky origin belongs to dice. St. Louis of France, for one, held dice in great horror, and at his court, as indeed in many medieval circles, men repeated to each other how dice were revealed by the Devil to a wicked Roman in the later empire. The Devil told this man to take a cube, to put on it one spot to insult God, two to insult God and Our Lady, three against the Trinity, four against the four evangelists, five against the Five Wounds, and six against the six days of Creation.

#### CROCODILES AND ELEPHANTS.

There are many callings in which the sovereign recipe for success is to say very little and to let other people talk themselves into disfavour or mutual dislike. The strong and silent Englishman is an empire type, and it seems probable that he got the hint how to behave from a creature who abounds in the empire, the crocodile. Crocodiles succeeded in getting themselves worshipped by the Egyptians largely on the ground that they had no tongue, and so nobly symbolized the eternal silence. Pliny seems to have been less sure about this silence, because, although he says "that this beast alone of all other that keep the land hath no use of a tongue," he also, in talking about their hard skins, says: "Yet who would deny that crocodiles were very witty?" But that is Philemon Holland's translation, and "witty" must not be taken to mean that crocodiles have ever been notable wags. Indeed, sobstuff is rather more in their line.

What a grand book Pliny's *Natural History* is, and what admirable things he tells us about the religion of elephants, who "not only embrace goodness, honesty, prudence and equity (rare qualities, I may tell you, to be found in men) and hold in religious

reverence the stars, planets, sun and moon," and he explains how elephants worship the new moon by having baths in its honour. And when they are ill they lie on their backs "casting and flinging herbs up to heaven as if deputing the earth to pray for them." It is not surprising that a week or two ago two elephants pushed some young children to baptism. Pliny has a remarkable recipe for achieving invisibility. The following ingredients have to be tied up in a deerskin, tied with the alternate sinews of a deer and a gazelle: (1 and 2) the tail and head of a dragon; (3) the hairs of a lion's forehead; (4) the marrow of the lion; (5) the foam of a horse that has won a race; and (6) the claws of a dog's feet. Only (6) seems reasonably easy to come by, and on the whole it would be simpler, as well as juster, not to endeavour to make use of it by hasty swallowing before the collection plate comes round.

#### OLD ENGLAND.

I was sorry to see the death of a great Fleet Street figure with whom I have had many a good talk in my day, Mr. Walter Haddon.

He was in the middle eighties, but he looked twenty years younger, and his memory went back to the first beginnings of modern advertising. In particular he broke England in to the habit of the fountain pen, when the first young Americans with the patent turned up in London and asked him to join them. They proposed to sell fountain pens at five shillings, but Walter Haddon insisted that it should be half a guinea, and that half the money should be used for sustained and large-scale advertising. He said "You've got to persuade the English to do something which they will instinctively think is very dirty, carrying ink in their pockets, and they cannot be persuaded to that in a small hole-and-corner way, but only by a large frontal attack." Very successful has that attack been. He could remember, too, the late Joseph Lyons, at the very outset of his career, obtaining the concession for a rifle range at a naval exhibition of 1882. Walter Haddon brought Phil May from Australia and was the first man to syndicate the writings as Dagonet of George R. Sims; but far back as his own memories went, his family traditions took him much further, for his family had farmed the land of Naseby field continuously for generations, long before the dreadful day of 1645, and it was still remembered in the family how, on the day of the battle, all the women and children were locked up in the parish church as the safest place. Walter Haddon left his father's home as a boy to seek his fortune in London, and he used to quote his father's parting advice: "Take your neighbour's money of him, but take it sixpence at a time"—a motto for the weeklies.

Viscount Harberton's *How to Lengthen Our Ears*, has the sub-title "An Enquiry Whether Learning from Books does not Lengthen the Ears rather than the Understanding," with a frontispiece with pictures of Swinburne, Wordsworth, William Whiteley, Goldsmith and Gibbon, their large ears prominently displayed. This is a very entertaining and shrewd book which starts with the idea that the inflated reputation which learning enjoys came about in the Middle Ages through the mass of the people gaping and goggling when they heard Latin being spoken. The same thought is met in one of Browning's poems: "Surely they must know, Don't you think they're likeliest to know, They with their Latin?" But on the other side there can be quoted the proverb, so little relished in ecclesiastical circles, that "a fool, unless he knows Latin, is never a great fool."

Viscount Harberton has a grand quotation from Schopenhauer, who says "The compulsory exertion of the brain in studies for which it is not fitted dulls the brain. The learning of Latin and Greek from the sixth to twelfth years lays the foundation of the stupidity of most scholars." Each chapter in this strange book has the word "ears" in it, and one of the later chapters is called "Divine Ears," where the headpiece to the chapter is taken from Dean Swift, in his best vein, saying "It is again objected, as a very ridiculous custom, that a set of men should be suffered, much less employed and hired, to bawl one day in seven against the lawfulness of those methods most in use towards the pursuit of greatness, riches and pleasure, which are the constant practice of all men alive on the other six."

#### OLD FISH.

After old books, old wine, old friends, there is a new addition to the pleasant litany of antiquity. Old fish, too, are best. Or so you can deduce, if you like, from the recent Nevada law which forbids you to catch catfish, if that is what you are doing with your life, unless the catfish has whiskers at least six inches long. If he has, the odds are he is an old bore, and better caught and cooked. America is a young country, and here is one more instance of American partiality for the young. "Go West, young catfish, go West."

#### AN ARGUMENT FOR CLEAN-SHAVEN JOWLS.

The higher critics, with their love of remote comparative data, will now be able to make a gloss on something which has puzzled them for a long time, the reason why the White Rabbit in *Alice in Wonderland* is so preoccupied with his whiskers. What if in a primitive society such as he adorned they were a title to life? The exclamation of that flustered animal: "Oh my ears and whiskers, how late it's getting," becomes all too poignant and plain.

*Alice* is one of the few books that even American business men know exists, and it consequently commands a very high collector's price. Dr. Rosenbach writes of it in his memoirs—an entertaining book of a lifetime of successful book dealing—in which he quotes with much relish the Scriptures, "'Tis nought, 'tis nought, saith the buyer ; but when he has gone his way, then he boasteth." He describes taking a walk near the British Museum and entering a small book shop ; finding no one about he wandered through to the back. There he came upon a little old man on a high stool with a steel pen and a pile of early editions of *Alice*, in which he was inscribing to mythical young ladies affectionate messages from their friend C. L. Dodgson. This he called touching up the copies for the American market. Dr. Rosenbach was the man who paid over £12,000 for the original MSS. of *Alice*. I have heard of several collectors who prefer contemporary MSS. to first editions, and I know of one short-story writer—an ex-pupil of the Benedictines but a writer of great human interest tales—who in the days of the Coolidge prosperity used to be paid more by a private collector for the MSS. of a story than the editors paid him for it. Sometimes he had no MSS., having typewritten his tale, and then he would sit down to copy it out by hand, putting in erasures and balloons full of fresh words at the side, and in many other ways taking care to give full value for money. The result was truly to be described as the author's manuscript, the only one in existence, even if it was not really the form in which the work of art first took shape, and he used to argue that the course he took made everyone happy and did injury to none. All the same, when we press our noses to glass panes in museums, looking at the original MSS of *Master Humphrey's Clock* or *Bleak House*, it would give us a great shock to learn that the author had, in fact, copied it all out by hand to please posterity, copied it from a printed copy of a typewritten or dictated work.

#### THE REIGN OF GEORGE VI.

I have a history of the reign of George VI, which was written in prophetic vein in the year 1763, and discovered and printed by Professor Oman in 1899. The unknown writer of this work thought that George IV would come to the throne in 1810, which was not so very far out ; that he would reign until George V succeeded him in 1848, and George VI, he thought, would reign prosperously from 1900 to 1925, winning a great many battles against the Emperor of Russia, who was cast for the part of menace to the rest of the world. This history assumed that wars of the eighteenth-century type would continue. George VI's ministers

are all dukes who go off in command of sixty ships of the line to execute brief and brilliant *coups*. By a daring stretch of the imagination the author makes the Budget by 1900 reach the huge annual figure of £14,000,000. Professor Oman in 1899, with the Boer War upon us, could make good fun of this £14,000,000, when the real Budget was going to be more like £90,000,000. He has lived to see the day in which it is more than £900,000,000. The Budget to-day is about equal to what the national debt was after Waterloo. This is a field in which Mr. Ramsay Macdonald's famous cry "On and on, up and up" is really true.

The Sultan of Turkey figures in this book as strong as ever, ruler of all the countries to the Danube, because by the eighteenth century he had become a habit of mind. It is interesting to read of the Duke of Atholl as First Lord of the Admiralty, a post from which he is, however, removed by death before the lively war in which Russia and Spain intervened so actively in 1919, invading France, where the prodigious successes of King George had kindled the jealousy of several of his neighbours who wished to see the rapidity of his conquests stopped. So far from their being stopped, the next entry is how the Duke of Devonshire conquers Flanders and Holland, and the final happy ending.

### WILL YOU HOLD ON AND ENJOY YOURSELF ?

The telephone service of the world continues to give its mind to human happiness, for Postmasters-General seem also to have "truly benevolent dispositions." The latest improvement, which has not yet come to this island, is that instead of asking you to hold on with nothing but your own thoughts for company, you are connected, while waiting for your trunk number, to music or other entertainment to keep you happy. If this humane practice is extended the only remaining snag about telephoning will be wrong numbers, and there the Post Office could do a little effective publicity to teach the great telephoning fraternity not to conclude that they have nothing to say to one another, but to see if the chance connection may not be the beginning of a beautiful and perhaps a useful friendship. Strangers should be encouraged to explain a little about themselves, and what number they really want and why. A little ceremonial politeness will often make people rather interested and pleased at coming across people whom they would never have met in their ordinary narrow rounds.

The Free Churches make much more effective use than we do of the wayside pulpit. Going down through the East End the other day, I saw a very striking observation on the wall of a small church. It merely remarked, "If God loved you as much as you love Him, where would you be?"

#### CLASSICAL SCHOLARS.

Nazi Germany gets more and more like Plato's Republic every day. I now read of the exhibition of bad music—what they neatly term musical decomposition—in the very spirit of the argument that there is nothing the legislator must watch more closely, as a source of political corruption, than the music which the citizens hear. The prolonged education of selected leaders, chosen for all-round qualities, is another chunk of Plato. The irony is that Plato has been of late the especial preserve of academic men of the kind who dislike the Nazis most. But the Platonic ideas are meant to be laid up, if not in heaven, at least well away from the earth.

#### GIVING THE PAST THE ONCE-OVER.

In an American magazine I found the advertisement of a really attractive book which tells the story of the human race in one volume, in terms of its successful men. Under the heading "The Fifty-One Lives that have Made World History" we can read about the big noises. The fifty-one begin with Moses, rather than Adam or Cain, and the list runs: "Jeremiah, Buddha, Confucius, Cyrus, Pericles, Plato" (but not Aristotle). Our Lord is inserted, in the manner of these publications, between Cæsar and Nero. The Christian representatives are then Constantine, Charlemagne, Peter the Hermit, St. Francis and Dante, Huss, John Ball, Joan of Arc, Torquemada, Luther and George Fox. The last seven places go to Tolstoy, the ex-Kaiser, Lenin and Gandhi, Mussolini, Hitler, Roosevelt. Roosevelt must be allowed in, because for an American publication it has been exceedingly modest, the only other American in the world history list being Abraham Lincoln. Extracts are given to show how these biographies are treated. Bismarck, we read, "Inaugurated the reign of the crimson fist; swept away generations of progress in a tempest of blood," which seems a little strong; whereas of Lenin we read "Few men have been so loved, but he made one sad mistake."

#### FRIDAY, SATURDAY, SUNDAY.

This book reminds me of a woman from Chicago, with whom I once found myself on a bathing expedition to the Dead Sea. She was a Chicago Jewess, and she made her living by giving a series of twenty-four drawing room talks called "Mán's Ascending

Ladder," each talk being devoted to a different great religious teacher, beginning, in the old way, with Moses and Confucius, but ending at the top of the ladder for her audiences with Emerson and, I rather fancy, Ralph Waldo Trine, author of "In Tune with the Infinite." I remember how emphatic she was about Emerson's right to a place. She explained to me her sight-seeing plan in Palestine. "Friday, that's the holy day of the Mohammedans, and I shall see Mohammedan things. Saturday, that's the Jews', and Sunday, that's the Christians'."

#### SOME GUIDES.

She does not shine in my memory with quite the refulgence of another Jew who met me at the station at Jerusalem and said he would like to look after me because he had a natural affection for Christians. This he proved by a story of what he had done in the Great War. He said "Then I had, like everyone else, to work under the Turks, and I was in the telegraph office, and one day the telegram came through from Constantinople to massacre all the Christians, and I dislike that, and on my own responsibility and at very great danger I added in the word 'Not' and make the message read 'not to massacre all the Christians.' " He did business as a guide, but I did not seek to pick his brains. On the Mount of Olives, it being the off season, I encountered a very smart Arab who firmly showed me a great number of sights. There was a very prolonged altercation about money at the end. He was a great strong Arab, but he pretended that he was so exhausted that he needed a motor to carry him up the Mount of Olives again from the valley of Jehoshaphat in which we were to part. I reminded him how he had told me he was twenty-six and full of strength, but all his strength, he said, had left him in the most mysterious manner. He would not come with me to put the matter to the arbitration of the manager of the Allenby Hotel, because he was not wearing trousers, and he said it would be so bad for his prestige to be seen without them.

#### GIVING UP THE WORLD.

"Exchange pair of Dragoons, 1937, for pair of Nuns." (From Miscellaneous section, *The Exchange and Mart*, April 7th, 1938).

#### MASTERS AND PUPILS.

The newspapers from West Africa always make good reading because of the boldness and vigour with which the English language is attacked and compelled into service. Many English schoolmasters must wish they had the same power to explain to their pupils that their punishment is for their good as this Gold



Coast writer in a recent paper, who says : "A teacher usually flog a boy in order to make him understand his folly ; and it is always the boy he loves that he flogs, so that he might not cultivate a bad habit.

"The boy who is too proud and disobedient, and in whom the teacher does not seem interested, is always let alone to grow immuned from mal-behaviour and the teacher's censures are always full of curses which eventually take effect on the boy, and makes him a useless fellow. I hope you will not like these sort of curses to be pronounced on you, and so you must be submissive." But the writer goes on to say, "If you make yourself a good boy and try to obey everybody, it will not be hard for you to approach them for any financial help to pay your school fees when your parents cannot afford it, or to ask them to explain to you anything you do not understand. Do not talk unnecessarily in the class you annoy the teacher and interfere with his work when you do so.

"The teacher is paid to do all the talking business, but your duty is to listen."

#### A NEW USE FOR THE GOSPELS.

The other day in the *New Statesman*, "Critic" was writing enthusiastically about one of the latest of David Low's standard cartoons. "Critic" thought it very fine because it showed the Prime Minister washing his hands of guilt in the manner of Pontius Pilate. But, complained "Critic," his younger friends while admiring the intention of the cartoon, did not understand the literary reference in the caption "He took water and washed his hands." They thought it was probably something to do with Macbeth, and they had not heard, apparently, of Pilate. This rather distresses "Critic," because it is going to weaken the force of literary allusions if no one recognizes them, and that seems to be the position with the New Testament among the younger intelligentsia, who are not likely to come across that work unless the Dean of Canterbury issues it with much editing and annotation as the choice of the Religious Left Book Club. Meanwhile "Critic" hopes to see them acquire what he calls a sensible literary knowledge of the Bible. They will find they will be able to enjoy things like Low's cartoons all the more, so the time will not be really wasted.

In *Caliban's Guide to Letters* there is an acute reference to the habit of quoting Biblical words and phrases as being the making of half our English writers of the more solemn sort. Mr. Somerset Maugham, in his book *The Summing-up*, has a good deal to say against the Authorized Version for its bad influence on English writers, deflecting from the older tradition of plain statement

I remembered him when I suddenly saw the following in a paper : "Unwrinkled as youth, Sophisticated as Babylon, Flawless as virtue, Seductive as sin." This message, for all its Biblical and theological overtones, is an advertisement for ladies' silk stockings.

## DISRESPECTFUL OBITUARIES.

That same paper has an editorial apology for "kicks the bucket," a phrase, says the editorial writer, "which appears to ill appeal to some of my learned readers." He explains that he used it in an obituary notice as "a mere resort to slang, exciting of curiosity and evasion of a too-frequently used word." He says "the deceased, about whom I have written much, and even addressed a biography, is my own relative, and I cannot shed crocodile tears over him." The advertisements in these papers are largely concerned with amulets and talismans "For luck and love, discovering hidden treasures, preventing witchcraft and prosperity in undertakings." I remember an Indian paper with some amulet advertisements, one of which printed testimonials from grateful users, and one testimonial said that the writer must write his grateful thanks as, since buying and wearing the talisman, his particular enemy, Ali Somebody Or Other, had been sentenced to a long term of imprisonment for a theft which the wearer of the talisman knew very well he had not committed.

## CHRISTIAN NAMES AND UNCHRISTIAN MANNERS.

Of Americans, who are now in season, there is only one kind I never want to meet, because I think them the most horrible things in the way of bipeds this planet has yet been asked to carry. I mean the commentators who accompany travel and news films with their crude, flippant, familiar and, in general, altogether odious remarks. They have no sort of reverence or reticence, and if they can get at a man or woman in the crisis of their lives they accost them at once by their Christian names. They would have called William the Conqueror Bill on the morrow of Hastings, before hurrying off to find Harold's relations to ask them how they felt, and if they could have got in to Charles I before his beheading they would have begun by calling him "Charlie." One of them, the other day, accompanying a film about Ceylon which showed some Buddhist monks, gave them some high American approval, saying, "They work hard and live frugally for what seems to be a fine constructive creed." Buddha, I suppose, is "Buddy" to them.

## THE TOWER.

Being unable, through the necessity of scribbling, to accompany my niece to the Tower of London, for a brief stay, I consoled

myself with the thought that even to-day the Tower is rather an uncomfortable place. It is not loneliness now that weighs down the spirits, but the lack of solitude, the persistent attentions of the guides. They are excellent men, but they have learnt to make their stories very simple for sightseers. "They come here for blood, and I give 'em blood" was the explanation of one of them some years ago when I asked why he was describing a perfectly good and ordinary, if deep, window as the sluice through which the blood used to come swilling. There were some American visitors to the Tower whose eyes were immediately caught by the Tower Bridge, which happened to open just as one of the Yeomen was turning off an imposing-looking electric switch. They concluded the bridge was worked by electricity from the Tower, and gave him great tips to open and shut it for them; which, by watching the river and picking his moments, he was well able to do. But next day at a different time, and to another Yeoman, there came more Americans, demanding to witness the same fascinating exhibiting of the power of electricity and man's command over nature.

#### ANY BIRDS WILL DO.

The religion of nature and the "blue dome, birds as choristers," school of theology, seem to have made another convert from the Christian ranks, judged by this advertisement in the *Exchange and Mart*. It says: "Large Bible published 1803. 1,400 wood engravings, Hebrew, Arabic and English translations, £5, or exchange for birds." If Biblical exchange standards govern this deal, as they surely should, the lucky owner will get instead of £5, 9,600 sparrows, at two for a farthing.

#### QUIET EVENING PASTIMES.

I see the Telephone Development Association tells boys and girls not to say "Hello," because it does not get anybody anywhere. They must say who they are, or ask who is speaking. This advice does not allow for the great number of people who are fond of secret telephoning, who like the telephone because it is anonymous, and who reply, when asked their name, by saying that it does not matter.

The Post Office cannot, of course, say so, but one of the pleasures they sell is relief from boredom, and the power of ringing up and engaging perfect strangers in conversation. This is sometimes done by picking a name at random in the book, and when answered, saying "It's me" or "It's I," according to choice, and when they say "Who are you?" you say "Surely you can guess." They guess, and you can either say "Of course" or

"Guess again," and then you are fairly launched, and have created an agreeable mystery in some quiet home, which is very often a kind of good work. It banishes that loneliness which is the curse of modern building estates.

#### OF COURSE YOU ARE INSURED.

*The Times Literary Supplement*, reviewing a Gollancz book on Spain, called *The Civil War in Spain*, quoted the author as saying that "martyrdom is simply a professional risk for a Spanish priest," and that "since civil war is a category of politics it is reasonable that man should be liquidated for his opinion." And the T.L.S. added drily that it was hard to believe that this kind of comment would commend the republican cause outside extremist circles. The notion of professional risk may lead to a procession of clerical gentlemen to the city to inquire of Lloyds what the insurance rates are in their particular case. The Clerical and General to note.

#### MAD HATTERS AND QUICK MARCH HARES.

The German hatters are mad, I read, because the Germans are choosing to economise on their heads and are more and more of them going about bareheaded. It is probably a consequence of the Nazi salute which ignores hats and heads. Englishmen and Frenchmen like to have lids to raise, and this habit, many centuries ago, surprised and irritated the Turks, who had a proverb, "I wish you no more rest than an Englishman's hat." Now authority in Germany has come down on the side of the hatters, and German girls are invited to scorn the hatless youth. But why, if respect for hats is wanted, is not more respect shown to Catholic dignitaries, who are the most hat-minded of men and who hold their heads in immense respect, as the size of Cardinals' hats makes plain?

#### CHEAP BUT LIVELY SIDE SHOWS.

The Glasgow Exhibition was, I am told, full of good ideas, but there is nothing in it to match, for economical cleverness, the San Francisco plan for next year, whereby all the criminals arrested in the Exhibition, and it is assumed there will be plenty, will be put on show, eight times a day. It is but one step from this to the pillory, and three shies a penny.

#### NAPOLEON'S ELEPHANT.

The Zoo in Budapest is a famous one. It was there that Napoleon's elephant lived until a year or two ago. Napoleon gave it to his father-in-law, who passed it on to his Hungarian

subjects. It was a beast less sweet tempered than most elephants and perhaps with rather more to remember. The last of human beings who saw Napoleon, died during the Great War. There was an old woman at Rainham in Essex, who lived to be a centenarian, and had been taken out as a little girl of five in the rowing boats that went round and round the Bellerophon, in Plymouth Harbour. Zaru Agreb, the Turk aged 150, whose old age was being commercialized a few years since, claimed that he had fought against Napoleon in Syria, but I doubt if he ought to be counted among the survivors, because he said that Napoleon was a short fat man in white, which was plainly a picture book memory, for the Napoleon of the Syrian campaign was lean and sallow.

#### THE SECRET OF LONGEVITY.

Undertakers, says the *News Review*, are in future not to be allowed to tout for orders.

#### THE UPWARD PATH OF JOURNALISM.

I suppose that as a profession or trade journalists are more ignorant of the history of their calling than most men who practise a specialized craft. In general they hate reading history, being as they would say, forward-looking fellows, and not fond of back numbers. This is as well, because the history of newspapers is a pretty violent history, even in the last 150 years, during which the Press has been, in Burke's handsome phrase "the fourth estate." In 1808 the Benchers of Lincoln's Inn proposed to exclude from the Bar all persons who had written in the daily Press, but even that doubtful status marked a great advance. The really lively times for journalists were the days when they were all competing for that highly important political scoop, the news that Queen Anne was dead. And one of them, a strong Opposition journalist, or as the contemporary account calls him "a scribbler against the Government," was murdered by hired assassins of the Government in 1704.

#### HIGHLY SPECULATIVE.

I hear that map makers, who used to like to think of their life as a quiet and regular one, find the present times a nervous strain, and manufacturers hesitate to produce large stocks of any maps. On the other hand, frontier rectification must be good for the map business, compelling people to buy the latest edition; but no doubt map-making was really more fun in the Middle Ages, where it was primarily a field for creative and imaginative art.

And when you were uncertain, as you generally were, about the geographical features of distant territories, you drew monsters and stood them about. It is the old maps that get framed and made into lamp-shades, or otherwise immortalized by loving human hands, primarily because of their decorative detail, for what is required of maps is not so much accuracy as bright colour.

#### DE BARBIS.

I asked a friend of mine who had just come from a gathering at Laxton how he had liked it, and he said "very well—but it was a forest of Beards." There are, I know, Catholic laymen who affect Beards as a little something the clergy have not got, but I have never understood them. I have more instinctive appreciation of the saying that there are few surer indications that a man lives in a very small world. There are, of course, plenty of exceptions, like the Capuchins and Sea-captains, and I imagine the originator of the dictum lived in Bloomsbury and did not care about the youngish men with beards who may be met there. There is something pretentious about young beards, and I think the objection to them is that they steal so much credit to which they have no claim, by getting into the picture when men are famous and the portraits are being painted which will one day hang in the National Portrait Gallery. Everyone thinks of Charles Darwin with a beard, but really he was, in his great formative days, a bulldog-like man with a square jutting chin, rather like a vet or a ship's doctor. To grow a beard belongs to the years of retirement. I remember an advertisement in *The Times* some years ago in which a man advertised for a quiet farmhouse to which he could retire to grow a beard.

#### A FAMOUS MUG.

The most famous beard in modern history belongs, like so many other records, to the Society of Jesus. For it was Bellarmine's beard that, like the rest of his emphatic face, figured on the Bellarmine Jugs which were so common a pattern through the early seventeenth century. I have one of them, which was dug up on the site of the old Angel Inn at Oxford many years ago, but was only recognized for what it is quite lately, when it caught the eye of Bellarmine's biographer, Father Brodrick, a man clean-shaven, as is the fashion now, but entitled, if beards were worn to show learning, to carry one a full cassock's length and more, over which his more impetuous and journalistic brethren could trip as they hurry to the post.

There are some fine specimens of Bellarmine jugs in the London Museum off St. James's Park—but there are fine and

unexpected things of every kind in that commonly ignored but splendid haunt, including some grand wax tableaux of the Road to Ruin, a subject which appeals to and pleases everybody.

#### WHITE BEARD.

And in old history what is the most famous beard? Bluebeard, I suppose, that very bad fifteenth-century hat whose religion is such a trump card for Protestant controversialists of the open-air variety. But if we distinguish sharply, as Mr. Belloc does and we all should do, between notoriety or publicity and real fame, surely there can be no question that the most famous beard in history was, and is, the great white beard of Charlemagne, of which we read so much in the Song of Roland.

"The Emperor rides very grandly, he has put his beard outside his mail, and because it shows him the others do the same. A hundred thousand of the French may be known by it." I quote from the excellent version by René Hague, which is the best exact rendering in English, and altogether, with its old French text, a splendidly produced work. Miss Jessie Crosland, in the King's Classic version, cannot be bothered to count up the hundred thousand Frenchmen, and just says "many French."

#### "THE BATTLE OF BOTTLE NOODLES."

Bang in the middle of the eighteenth century, in the heart of the age of reason, in 1748, and in fashionable London, there occurred the great bottle swindle. The Duke of Montague was behind it, for a wager on the credulity of man. He put the following advertisement in the papers :—

"At the New Theatre in the Hay market, on Monday next, the 12th instant, is to be seen a Person who performs the several most surprising things following, viz. :—1st. He takes a common walking Cane from any of the Spectators, and thereon plays the music of every Instrument now in use, and likewise sings to surprising perfection. 2nd. He presents you with a common Wine Bottle, which any of the spectators may first examine ; this Bottle is placed on a Table in the middle of the Stage, and he (without any equivocation) goes into it, in the sight of all the Spectators, and sings in it ; during his stay in the bottle, any Person may handle it, and see plainly that it does not exceed a common Tavern Bottle. Those on the Stage, or in the Boxes, may come in masked habits (if agreeable to them) ; and the Performer, if desired, will inform them who they are. Stage, 7s. 6d. ; Boxes 5s. ; Pit, 3s. ; Gallery, 2s. Tickets to be had at the Theatre. To begin half-an-hour after six o'clock. The performance continues about two hours and a half."

As if there were not enough, it went on to say that the performer would tell those who were rash enough to ask, the most secret thoughts of their past life, and give them a full view of persons who had injured them, whether dead or alive. The notice added: "For those gentlemen and ladies who are desirous of seeing this last part, there is a private room provided." He added that these performances have been seen by most of the crowned heads of Asia, Africa and Europe, and never in public before.

#### THE SIMPLE BUTCHER.

Is it surprising that the theatre was crowded? The crowd waited for an hour, during which nothing happened at all till noise and catcalls began, and, in the end, the audience smashed up the theatre and everything that could be moved was thrown about. There was then a rush to the doors, "So dreadful that wigs, hats, cloaks and dresses were left behind and lost," and it will please all Jacobites to know that in the general panic the Duke of Cumberland lost his sword and had to advertise for it, promising thirty guineas reward and no questions asked. It is thought to have been a Jacobite who answered the Duke's advertisement, saying: "Found entangled in the slit of a lady's demolished smocked petticoat, a gold hilted sword of martial length and temper, nothing worse for wear, etc., lost in the precipitate retreat from the battle of bottle noodles."

After that, for weeks, individuals whom rumour connected with the hoax had to put advertisements in the paper saying they had nothing to do with it, and had been as much deceived as everybody else. After that, fantastic advertisements became the rage. One of the nicest was that of Signor Capitello Jumpedo, a surprising dwarf who promised to open his mouth wide and jump down his own throat. After Italy, Abyssinia. There was an advertisement from "the Ethiopian Doctor Zammanpoango," who said that if the spectators would pull out their eyes and remove their stomachs and brains he would put them all back, on the stage in front of everybody, and no harm done.

#### FOR NERVOUS STRAIN.

A man called to see me last week, and when I sent down to find more exactly the reason for the call, the answer came back that he had come to discuss the state of the world, the future of the Church, and the general outlook for humanity. Negotiations are still proceeding. I am told that a good cure for vexation at the news is to sit down and write long letters of advice, of a very intimate kind, to public men, reminding them of all sorts of



weaknesses in their character and record, but overlooking their failings and encouraging them to overcome their shyness and rely much more freely on your advice and help. It is important not to post the letters with correctly addressed envelopes. Indeed, I heard of one man who wrote copious letters to Lord Milner at the end of the war, but posted them to Lord Milner, care of himself. If it is asked why there should be any relief in going on like this, the answer is that writing is in fact an outpouring and a release, like crying. The Victorians, who looked after their nerves so much better than we do, went in a great deal for writing very long letters in which they expressed themselves without stint. They also howled and exploded more than we do; and they broke down less.

## THE FEWER THE CHEAPER.

I read that in Chickasha, Oklahoma, the bald-headed men have organized the Brotherhood of the Burnished Brow, in order to secure a cheaper rate when they go to the barber. But barbers are artists, and will no doubt explain that where there is very little hair anyway, much more skill is required, not only in cutting it, but in brushing it. When a man has only three or four hairs altogether it takes a master barber to lay them like sardines carefully across the pate to give a sort of impression of restrained fuzziness. The Chickasha baldheads are, in fact, committing the stock American mistake of judging everything by quantity. In no calling has sheer quantitative measurement done more damage than in journalism. The adjective "telegraphese," the phrase "a penny-a-liner" both point to the evil day when payment for occasional contributions was stabilized by the line and put a premium on verbosity. It was too much to expect of reporters that they would seek a terseness and precision which was to make them poorer with each piece of pruning.

## COMPLETE WITH CARNIVAL HAT AND ROSARY.

From the north of England I received a catalogue with details of more reverend crackers than our fathers knew. Says the pious cracker-maker:—

"Christmas Crackers.—The Cracker is a traditional institution in Great Britain at Christmastide, and no household omits it from its seasonal festivities. Up to the present, however, no type of Cracker has been available to Catholics which would combine the spirit of Christmas together with a direct allusion to our Faith. Our attention was attracted to this matter and we have now produced a Cracker which will fulfil the above requirements, and which all Catholics will welcome when planning bazaars, and other

asonal festivities. Our Crackers are the first ever produced for this purpose.

"Packed in attractive boxes suitable to the occasion, they express the full Christmas spirit of goodwill and cheer. Our Crackers are in the five liturgical colours and, in addition to the usual indispensable carnival hats, are filled with pleasing gifts in the form of rosaries, scapularies [*sic*], medals, and other objects of a devotional nature. This year mottoes have been omitted, but in future we hope to supply a Cracker with suitable mottoes. Our Crackers will enable all Catholics, Priests and Laity alike, Schools, Convents and Institutions to choose easily, with the knowledge that the pleasing gifts contained in them will serve even in the midst of festivities to keep our Faith present in the minds of their recipients." I wonder he does not say "suitable for pulling in church."

#### INFORMATIVE CALLING CARDS.

I am told that the French use two kinds of visiting cards, one with their name and one with a great deal more information about themselves. They say with truth that this information in a country sharply divided over politics and religion might be made yet more sensitive, and that men might put on their cards the subjects out of which it is unsafe to talk. The oddest form of card which ever came my way was that of a Greek statesman whose card ran "Iliato Irakoulis, Ex-Prime Minister of Greece, and Life Member of the Oxford Union." The most useful thing to put on your card, if you have a common name, is that you are not related to her and better known people with the same name. A Frenchman called Rousseau, accordingly printed that he was no relation of an Jacques, and did not think much of him.

#### THE PROCRUSTEAN WORLD OF PRINT.

Mr. J. L. Garvin, who cannot be suspected in this matter of any personal bias, argues that for good writing, the shorter it is made the more highly it would be remunerated because the more difficult is the task. Publishers too, but they are only the scapegoats for the public, are fond of stipulating a minimum length for purposes of manufacture and sale. They like at least seventy thousand words in a biography, and anything under thirty thousand words they will not look at at all. Yet these lengths are wholly artificial and bear no relation to the length a particular piece of writing ought, on artistic grounds, to be. One of the bad features about the decline of quarterlies and monthlies, is that it proceeds side by side with a newspaper tendency not to like anything over two thousand words at the most. Even when several articles are printed on the same subject it is difficult for a

writer to get more than ten thousand allowed him, whereas if he writes a book it must be over thirty thousand. There is a kind of no-man's land between ten and thirty thousand which is only filled by certain sixpenny books, but their popularity and success does show, incidentally, that twenty to twenty-five thousand words is a very reasonable length for the treatment of all sorts of subjects.

#### THE CATS OF GERMANY.

I read that the cats of Germany are to be Nazified and made into efficient and patriotic rat and mouse-catching animals, eager to sacrifice all nine lives at a go for their country. The vast propaganda machine will have its work cut out for it, because public spirit has never been too strong with cats, who are quintessential individualists with Herbert Spencer's view of the State as a necessary small nuisance. With those views, what, we may ask, are they doing in such numbers in the British Civil Service, where some of them figure in the estimates with their milk allowances? They are there partly to discourage mice who have taken to Whitehall since women came, and with women, tea and biscuits twice a day ; but mainly to represent private life in all its majesty to bureaucrats who might otherwise forget the living creatures behind the printed forms.

There will be a fine tussle of wills in Germany now ; and if things go wrong, an exodus.

#### BEARDS FOR GRAVITY.

Why, we may pause to ask, should lawyers who sell the little god they do mankind so very dear, have almost a monopoly of the help of ritual dress ? Uniform is a support, and without the surplice and the cassock, no self-confident exhortation. Then why should the writer, who works so much alone and needs strength, be expected to perform in his ordinary clothes ? Obviously the leader-writers of our graver journals would find their task easier if they adjusted artificial beards before they began, and paper caps would help in the office of the penny newspapers.

#### HOW TO WRITE.

The correspondence schools continue to display, at much expense, in the Press, their concern lest the supply of writers should fail. The ore, they say, is abundant, and not far below the surface ; it only needs a few skilled instructions to get it out. But what no correspondence school undertakes to teach is how to keep it up year after year as those writers must learn to do, who in the first flush of acceptance and cheques have sold their

greengrocery businesses or their photographer's outfits, and are leaning heavily and with increasing strain and growing dependence on their pens. For there is no sort of natural correspondence between the length of a natural life and the length of a literary life. It may rather be said that the one is from a third to a half of the other at the best, that men who live, as grown up men, for half a century, are well endowed writers if they are vital and active for twenty-five. Everything they write must play its part in keeping them now and later on, unless, like many of the great fraternity, their free hearts and generous appetites lead them into habits which prevent there ever being any later on.

#### A TIP.

I write these lines not to sadden my own dearest friends who all over England are banging typewriters and sucking pencils and removing superfluous hair from the interstices of nibs at this, and every other, very moment. I write constructively, as in a corporate state, and I have advice for them all, for strangers too. It is to tell them one of the secrets if not of literary success, at any rate of literary productivity. Write wearing a hat. This is a simple matter, for most writers have hats. I do not think it is a purely physical matter of warming the pate while the blood circulates busily about the brain as though it were market day. I do not think it makes men feel for the moment that they are Jews and resolved to succeed at all costs. I think it is that a hat, especially in a comfortable room, forbids relaxation and slacking and any notion of ease. It suggests all the time that it is quite accidental that one is sitting down. In a moment one will be up and off, and the writing is part of the busy work of the world, and must be settled here and now.

#### FETCH ME MY CONICAL CAP.

Those wise men, the astrologers of old, never settled down to prophecy without seeing that the crocodile was in position under the ceiling, and that their conical caps were firmly on their heads. They found they drew a better pentagram so, and how right they were, for despite the proved difficulties of successful prophecy, they have invested their calling with an abiding lustre, so that it is unconquerably entrenched in the fickle hearts of men.

#### PASSIONATE, BUT NOT SO BLOODY.

A cutting from a Malay newspaper on the subject of Mary Tudor, begins: "It is to be remembered that, though Mary was passionately devoted to the Catholic faith, her personal conduct was above reproach."

People often remark on the difficulty of getting news from Russia, or finding out what is really going on in that vast area, but perhaps some light is thrown on this, doubtful as Soviet statistics are, by the report of the Chamber of Books of the U.S.S.R., which boasts that in the twenty-one years since 1917, 115,000,000 copies of Lenin's works have been issued. They have been issued, the Soviet being a big place, in seventy-two different tongues, so that when you have finished them in one language you can begin them again in another. Some of the peoples in the Soviet territory had no written language till the works of Lenin were translated into their speech. In the fourteen years since Lenin's death, 108,000,000 out of the 115,000,000 have appeared. In an essay on the death of a comic author, Mr. Belloc once described the publisher's excitement at the news, "since the death of an author will often cause his works to sell for a week or more with increased rapidity." Lenin is not conspicuously a comic author, but his case bears out this generalization.

#### TIME-WORK OR PIECE-WORK.

A friend of mine, looking at some of the beautiful medieval manuscripts with exquisite miniature capitals, in a museum in north Italy, had matters explained to him by a fellow visitor, an American, who was marvelling even more than my friend at the enormous patience necessary for such work, and, said the American, "you know how they produced these things. They gave them to the old monks to do and let them know that when the work was finished the monk would be bumped off. It paid them to take trouble then, and I'll say they took some."

That nice American, when he visits old monasteries and sees the great libraries, will no doubt conclude that reading, too, was compulsory and capital matter, and there are a great many people outside the cloister as well as within for whom there could be few greater punishments than to be ordered to read a long book. A Norwegian law court has just condemned a Danish novelist, who brought a libel action against a Norwegian reviewer, and lost it and it has sentenced him to read twenty volumes of the works of Freud. The libel law now before Parliament makes no provision for penalties of this sort, or indeed for any court punishment for those who bring libel actions and lose them, and I have not heard of the ecclesiastical courts ordering anybody to read Migne's Patrology, though the world is stiff with people who would be the better for taking the complete course.

The *News Chronicle* printed the results of a children's preference scale conducted among fifty thousand American boys and girls, who were asked to name "the most loved man in the world." President Roosevelt was first, and God was second. For third place the boys chose George Washington, the girls, Abraham Lincoln. For the two most hated men, it may be easily and correctly imagined, the results were (1) Hitler, (2) Mussolini. The shade of President Woodrow Wilson must be glowering with indignation at the way his former Secretary to the Navy has beaten him to it.

#### EGBO.

In a very pleasant work called *African Doctor*, by Dr. Gerald Garry, I have been reading how he listened in Freetown, Sierra Leone, to a native preacher who was proceeding merrily with the Origin of Man: "God made man from a piece of clay and stuck him on a fence to dry," when a interruptor called out, "Massa, who made der fence?" This far from clever or difficult question stumped the preacher for a moment, but then, says Dr. Garry, he replied in a severe tone: "Such interruptions very unseemly and enuf to upset any system of theology."

But the best system of theology in this book is represented by the tall wooden pillar which symbolized "the Grand Egbo, the non-existent chief of a secret society bearing that name." But that was in the days of King Oko Jumbo.

#### ETRUSCAN TOMBS.

I wonder the English do not make more of the Etruscans. I have just been visiting the tombs of Tarquinium in Etruria, and going down the shafts of tombs in the middle of fields. And at the bottom you come to chambers whose walls are painted in still vivid colours, with pictures of life as rich Etruscans lived it. They are pictures wholly in the spirit of the Illustrated Sporting and Dramatic News, and huntin', shootin' and fishin', with feastin' and dancin' added. The Etruscans went in for a very unusual kind of tombstone, effigies of themselves reclining on couches, postures which fitted much more easily if you were going to carve on the lid of a tomb than any other kind of posture. They are very striking, being naturally the tombs of important persons, with commanding expressions, the great ladies as prominent and imposing as the great men, and they give the impression that they are arising from the stone to live again their full and active lives.

This was overheard on a London 'bus, at the time of the Pope's Election :—

"I see they're electing another Pope." "Yes, and it's ten to one they'll give the job to another of those b—— Roman Catholics."

#### THE IRISH INFLUENCE.

And in Liverpool an old parishioner, after listening to the wireless, came out and told his parish priest, "They've elected a Pope, Father. I've just heard it on the wireless. One of those Americans, a fellow called Pat Kelly."

#### THE EQUALITY OF MAN.

One of the great myths which flourish in the Anglo-Saxon countries is that the Latin races are particularly keen on money. Even Mr. Belloc in *The Path to Rome*, I remember, gives currency to this impression, but then I think he was talking about the French or the North Italian. Of the Romans as of the Neapolitans, it is quite untrue that they are particularly impressed by or keen about money. They like to manage with very little, and take life very easily. You are often reminded of the admirable story of the Andalusian. An English traveller, arriving at Seville, offered him five pesetas to carry a bag. After going a short distance, the Andalusian put down the bag and said it was not worth carrying for five pesetas. The Englishman offered him ten, and the journey was resumed. After a while the Andalusian again put down the bag and began fumbling in his pocket, and produced twenty pesetas, and said he really could not carry the bag any further, and would the Englishman accept the twenty pesetas and carry the bag himself.

#### THE POPE AND TRAFFIC.

More ought to be made in Rome of the Milvian Bridge, the spot and centre from which the rule of the road, the law by which all traffic in England keeps to the left, was promulgated by Pope Gregory the Great thirteen hundred years ago. It was the French Revolution, with its passion for starting the world anew, which changed the Continent from left to right, but in this matter the English remained true Pope's men.

#### UNDERCURRENTS.

I wonder whether it is true that it was the English Civil War and the issues finally resolved in 1688 which were responsible for the English trait of avoiding discussion about religion. I

rather suspect it is a later fruit, part of the general hatred and fear of enthusiasm. Doctor Johnson's circle discussed every sort of thing, but then its members were in agreement on the main points. In the last century, people poured themselves out in letters to their relations and friends with a lack of reserve which also plainly marked their conversation. I expect it was Victorian England, with more and more people secretly doubting because of Victorian science, which was responsible for the convention which has taken such firm root, so that England is full of people pursuing subterranean and private religious speculations, but hardly ever exchanging ideas with anybody else. It is said of Matthew Arnold that he would not willingly talk about nothing. "A quality," commented Lord Morley, "which would not be so praiseworthy if it was not, in fact, so rare."

#### THE ECONOMICS OF NOT RAISING HOGS.

Lord Sempill read out the following excellent letter at a recent meeting of the Economic Reform Club, in criticism of the farm policy of the Roosevelt Government :—

"Sir—A friend of mine in New England has a neighbour who has received a Government cheque for 1,000 dollars this year for not raising hogs. So my friend now wants to go into the business himself, he not being very prosperous just now ; he says, in fact, that the idea of not breeding hogs appeals to him very strongly.

"Of course he will need a hired man, and that is where I come in. I write to you as to your opinion of the best kind of farms not to raise hogs on, the best strain of hogs not to raise, and how best to keep an inventory of hogs you are not raising. Also, do you think capital could be raised by issuance of a non-hog-raising gold bond ?

"The friend who got the 1,000 dollars got it for not raising 500 hogs. Now we figure we might easily not raise 1,500 or 2,000 hogs, so you see the possible profits are only limited by the number of hogs we do not raise.

"The other fellow had been raising hogs for forty years, and never made more than 400 dollars in any one year. Kind of pathetic, isn't it, to think how he wasted his life raising hogs when he could have made so much more not raising them ?

"I will thank you for any advice you may offer.

Harold Trueman."

#### COMPULSORY SEASIDE TRUTH.

I see that the landladies of Lynton and Lynmouth are to be taught truthfulness by the Town Council ; at least, all their



notices are to be censored, and when they say their rooms are a stone's-throw from the sea, an average stone-thrower will come and test the matter. If they say there is a good sea view, the town official will come and see if it necessary to stand on a chair to get a glimpse of the sea. This is all very well, but in the humane tradition, innkeepers and temporary hosts are allowed a certain licence. It will be a foolish Town Council which represses the exuberant fancy of its landladies, whose lively tongues can do so much to make holidays really holidays. If the town guide really wants to help, instead of being pedantic about the distance from the sea, which is over-praised anyway, they would indicate by one or two stars the landladies with lively fancies, who are good conversationalists, and can make any meal appetizing with their anecdotes. The same official visit, which is to be paid anyway, would afford the data for this very important information. It is a curious thing that hotels and boarding houses are so indiscriminate. Because they all want all the people they can get, they hesitate to strike any sort of exclusive note, or to specialize, and the result is a great deal of what may be called 'social wastage.'

#### AMERICAN DIPLOMATS.

In the life of William Jennings Bryan there is a lovely letter in which, as Secretary of State, he offered the St. Petersburg embassy to a Democrat who had worked well for the party in the Middle West. The only condition Bryan made was that the man should resign after a year and a half, as the Democratic Party had not been in power for twenty years, and there were heaps of people to be rewarded. He said it didn't matter how long you held the position, what was nice was for your children and grandchildren to be able to say they were all relations of a former Ambassador to Russia, and he added a promise that there would be no vexatious public business to be attended to. He wrote this in 1913.

#### THE BIG BATTALIONS.

The *Daily Worker* reproduced a striking misprint from *La République*, a newspaper written in French, but published at Istanbul:—

"Londres, 27 (dép. att.)—Lord God, chef de l'état-major britannique est parti pour la France où il inspectera la ligne Maginot.

"Accompagné d'une mission militaire, Lord God visitera la région frontrière entre la France et l'Allemagne."

The *Manchester Guardian* quotes a teacher in a secondary school who attributes the low standard of book education to the late age at which so many children now learn to read. She quoted one private school where, she said, interest was far too much diffused, because not only were children first told how bricks were made, but then were allowed to spend hours making what were called bricks, but were really no more than our old friends, mud pies. And what was the result? Valuable months were lost in early life, and the children never really made good.

I know of a French girl whose education was started when she was two, her parents impressing upon her, as the first fact for her journey through life, that there was no time to be lost. She was taught to compare things one with another, and by six, when she was taken to America, to be adopted in a family there, she found herself extremely unpopular because she knew far more than all the other children, and put out all their plans for joint lessons. My grandmother in Cornwall, a hundred years ago, learned to read when she was three, and was at once put to reading the Bible to her grandparents, whose eyesight by then was not so good as it had been. Afterwards, when the Bible was mentioned, she did not exactly say that she had finished with it when she was three, but something of that impression remained from her talk, and her later years went more resolutely to whist. It might be better to do these things the other way round, but card games still have an uphill walk before them to get into the school curriculum.

#### A VERY JUNIOR COUNSEL.

I knew, too, a law don at Oxford, a mild-looking little man, but consumed inwardly with a vast ambition, which was that his infant son should become Lord Chancellor. He used to say that in these days of intense competition a man could not start too early in the race for legal pre-eminence, and instead of telling his little son nursery rhymes he taught him, in the form of stories, certain leading cases in the common law which would be invaluable later on.

There is obviously a great deal of scope in the form of more educative walls and wall-papers for parents who are ambitious for their offspring. If one boy lives year in and year out with meaningless patterns of flowers round the walls, how will he stand, when the great day of the examination dawns, in competition with a boy whose thoughtful parents have covered the walls with accurate maps of the world, both in the past times and to-day, and with the dates and characters of the English kings? What may be called the framework of scholastic achievement could be

#### WHAT TO REPLY.

imbibed absolutely painlessly simply by living in it through the long years of early childhood. The richly decorated cathedrals and churches of Catholic Europe were decorated on the principle that nobody's idle eye was to roam without being arrested, and its owner taught a sound Biblical or allegorical lesson, but the modern passion for bareness and austerity of line leaves people to gape, with nothing to feed on but the impressions and knowledge already inside their heads.

Mr. Lewisham, the hero of *Love and Mr. Lewisham*, had the French irregular verbs pinned up over the washstand— or wash-hand-stand—in his attic from this same lively sense of the swift passage of time, and Cardinal Ximenes had a good book read aloud to him while he was being shaved, being, as he said, a miser of his time.

#### WHAT TO REPLY.

The following remarks of the psychologist Jung are, it seems to me, worth cutting out and carrying about with you to produce whenever you happen to annoy anybody. They are the perfect apology for use on all occasions of social gaffes :—

“The true genius nearly always intrudes and disturbs. He talks to a temporal world out of a world eternal. And thus he says the wrong things at the right time. Eternal truths are never true at any given moment in history. The process of transformation has to reassert itself in order to digest and assimilate the utterly unpractical things that the genius has produced from the storehouse of eternity. Yet the genius is the healer for his time, because anything he betrays of eternal truth is healing.”

#### SOVIET LITERATURE.

From a speech by Comrade Michael Sholokhov: “With all the profound human modesty of Stalin, he has to tolerate the sentiment of our love and devotion to him (*applause*), because not only among us who work and live under his leadership, but among all working people, all hopes for a happy future for mankind are indissolubly associated with his name.” But in this speech Comrade Sholokhov, while saying how fine it was to be a Soviet writer, “whose readers speak to us daily about our work,” went on to speak of the less cheerful side, the question of paper: “The percentage of paper allotted to the publication of literature is regrettably insignificant . . . Things must be organized in such a way that paper is provided in expectation of good books, and not *vice versa*.” He went on to say that “in a war Soviet writers would not throw away their despatch cases, but take the enemies’ despatch cases, which in future literary work would

33  
provide useful material." This is a new line of recruiting appeal to literary men, that they will not merely gain experiences which they will be able to turn to good account, but can even hope to find as loot in the routed enemies' tents unpublished MSS. and other saleable material.

#### DIAL 666.

A correspondent writes to tell me that, in case I hadn't noticed it, there is someone in the London Telephone Directory called Pax Pope. The London Directory is the book I use most, but more, it is true, for reference than for browsing. It is not the book I would choose to take with me to a desert island, supposing I could only have one book, but it is invaluable, and I often wonder why the G.P.O., in their publicity to make more people have telephones, do not wave before them the prospect of all the lovely new friends and acquaintances, their fellow-members of the great telephoning club, whom a subscription would entitle them to ring up.

Some years ago when the Pope was given a golden telephone, the gift, though well-meant, had its drawbacks, because it suggested to all sorts of journalists, wanting to collect views for those symposia which are one of the cheapest ways of providing a feature for a newspaper, that they could add the Vatican to the places they could ring up for a quick answer. In Lord Northcliffe's hectic days in control of the *Daily Mail* there was a news-editor who was told to collect views about the tango, and gave much not unnatural offence by sending off a telegram, which just said: "Pope, Vatican, Rome. Wire views tango." It may have been the golden telephone which suggested to a number of devout American Catholics some years ago the idea, which proved abortive, of giving the late Holy Father a pair of golden roller skates to lessen the fatigue of the public audiences.

I remember Father Allan Ross, the Oratorian, telling me of a woman who came to talk about becoming a Catholic, but whose mind was beset with difficulties, and in particular she could not disentangle herself from the idea that the Pope was Antichrist, for she said: "If he is not Antichrist, why does he have the number 666 as his laundry mark on all his garments?"

#### THE ADOPTION.

"I hear you have adopted a baby!"

"Yes, he is two months old—a little Austrian."

"Why an Austrian?"

"When he begins to speak we shall have an opportunity of learning German."

Michael Trappes-Lomax, in his lively frisk with St. George and the Dragon, asks, in a fine rhetorical way, how St. George came to be the patron of England, but he does not provide what I have always been taught as the historical answer, that we owe him to Robert, Duke of Normandy, the son of the Conqueror, who went on the first Crusade and was extricated from certain acute difficulties by the intervention of a saint whom he found people in Palestine knew all about and were accustomed to invoke. All this in the year 1098. I do not see why people need be sceptical about St. George's dragon, when many years later, and as we might say, almost in our own days, one of the Knights of Rhodes, in the fourteenth century, Gozo de Dieudonné, killed a most notable dragon on the island. He gave his whole mind to its destruction, going back to France and constructing a model of it which he trained fierce dogs to go for, and the skull of the beast, nailed up over one of the gates, remained through the two Turkish sieges, apparently unharmed, and is described by seventeenth-century travellers. If the Turks did not build, they did not destroy, and they were like lava as a preservative, so the story is not really as strange as it sounds.

I always feel sorry for the poor Komono dragons in the Zoo, who have to maintain the enormous traditions of their species, and who are small and quiet beasts, who fortunately do not know of the tremendous associations the word "dragon" stirs in the minds of the crowds who look at them.

#### FIT FOR WHAT?

No one will quarrel with the definition of fitness adopted by the National Fitness Council and proclaimed by Lord Dawson of Penn, "Fitness is a state of physical, mental and spiritual well-being in which the individual can perform and enjoy the activities of his leisure and working hours." Controversy is happily avoided by that blessed word "activities." We know from the Night Starvation advertisements that sleep is certainly an activity, consuming energy all the time. I remember a little boy in Tasmania, whose father asked him eagerly what he was going to be, and he replied that he intended to sit at home, gaping. If he is able to do that, he is fit, and comes under the definition all right. For my part I wish the National Fitness Council would take their motto from Pascal, that all the troubles of the world come from men not being able to sit quietly at home. It is a slogan of which the armchair manufacturers might make good advertising use.

"Fit" is one of the English words which bothers foreigners because its plural makes so much difference to its sense. But it is a valued member of even the smallest vocabulary. Men from India

who otherwise make what are termed "Poonah noises," all know the word "fit" and probably the adjective "tremendously"; and many a man's physical history runs—fit, fat, phut.

#### THE GREAT DUMAS.

No one was a greater exponent of the quiet and colloquial style in public utterance than the late Prime Minister. It is a style particularly necessary at the present time. But he told the Royal Literary Fund that the elder Dumas was a favourite author of his, and the people in Dumas bring into private life a vehemence of speech very reminiscent of the noisier platform. There are people in *Angé Pitou* and its companions who speak in private rooms with such intensity that either they or the person they are talking to falls senseless to the ground, and this happens pretty often, and enables Dumas to keep the action brisk, even when it is talk. He lives in literary history as a typical product of the factory epoch. A captain of industry, he produced over three hundred books by the free use of "ghosts," and so achieved his satisfactory output before the age of typewriters or dictaphones. I am told by pundits that the huge folios of the Fathers of the Church—Dumas was not, of course, a Father of the Church—achieved their copiousness because they were all dictated, hour after hour, to slaves. A friend of mine told me how he once stayed in the house of a writer who had made his name—a modest and low grade love and adventure serial name—and saw a small factory at work. This author employed two girls. To one he would say "Have the lovers quarrelled?—then make one of them elope," and to the other he would say "Have you disinherited the hero?—well, make him emigrate to Canada, and give him a rough time on a farm till I look in again later in the morning." Like that, he said, he had a pleasant foreman's life. Even as a foreman he had only to work in the morning, and yet he produced six or eight full-length stories a year.

#### TOO MUCH THOUGHT FOR TO-MORROW.

Once, many years ago, when I was in Amsterdam, standing under the railway bridge which carries the line over the canals to the west, a negro came up to me with a bright yellow boot on one foot and carrying the other boot in his hand. He explained he was a British sailor who had missed his ship and was stranded, and would I buy the boot so that he could get some breakfast. I asked him why he did not offer them for sale as a pair, but looking very shrewd he pointed to the one he was wearing and said: "That? I was keeping that one for to-morrow's

breakfast." I hope he got away from Holland fairly quickly, because he was plainly no match for Dutch business capacity. I remember once a barber, back in England after many years in South Africa, saying that the attitude of the Dutch to the native population was absolutely right. He said: "I don't mind telling you I don't like those black men," and when I asked him what was wrong with them, he said: "Well, you can put it like this. They are the kind of people that if you give them fivepence-halfpenny, it's no use trying to make them think it is sixpence."

He would have hailed as a brother the enterprising overseer to whom a native complained that he had been given the wrong wages, producing a Ready Reckoner to show what he ought to have had. The overseer took the Ready Reckoner, looked at it with contempt and handed it back, saying: "That's no use. That's last year's Ready Reckoner."

#### THE WARFARE BETWEEN RELIGION AND SCIENCE.

All the people who hope to get rich by supplying the Spaniards with machinery will snarl when they hear of the traditional Spanish substitute for hour-glass egg-timers. It is to say two Paternosters for a lightly-boiled egg, three was for a hard-boiled egg.

#### THE DEVIL'S PALINDROME.

It runs:—"In girum imus nocte et consumimur igni." The Devil's Latin is of course Kitchen Latin.

#### BRIGHTER DOGS.

Among the balls "in aid of" now being arranged I hear there is one in aid of a fund to teach road sense to dogs. There is no saying where this will end. I have never known one which would not have been the better for instruction, if not in road sense, then in house manners. Some years ago I remember a book called *Almost Human*, which called for volunteers to help dogs over the small gap which, said the author, was still keeping them from full participation in our human life, with such amenities as it has to offer.

#### OUT OF DATE, NOT OUT OF REACH.

Nazi Germany is generally thought to be more preoccupied with the future than with the past, but it has revived various past practices, and I read in the *News-Review* that "massing of torch-bearers and other activities akin to medievalism, practised in Hitler's Germany, have raised sneers in more Liberal nations." Now, says this paper, a still more picturesque relic, a horse-drawn

mail coach, is to be revived in the Black Forest in the Bavarian Alps. The German Postmaster General's name is one any man might envy, for he is Dr. Ohnesorge. He is setting an example to the world is not being trammelled, as Americans in particular are, by thinking that if anything is obsolete it is a kind of sin to go back to it. The mail coach has all the advantages over the train for certain kinds of country journeys, and provided you are not in a great hurry, which, after all, nobody, generally speaking, ever is.

Oil lamps are another instance of an old way of living with special merits of its own, but now altogether discredited. In old prints of London, the lamp makers with their shops and factories held a very prominent place, and lamp trimming was a daily occupation in the house, which is, I suppose, the main reason why even people who like lamps do not attempt to have them. But men ought to feel that they have the freedom of the centuries and the benefit of all past inventions, even those which have been trumped. It ought not to be thought an eccentric pose to use a tinder and flint in preference to matches.

#### WHITEWASH TURNS TRAITOR.

Preachers who want a vivid illustration of the folly of hoping to persist and thrive in wickedness, have it ready to their hand in the Whitewash Van of the Great Western Railway. Whitewash has always been thought of as the sinner's friend, but now it is to be used to draw special attention to defects; at any bump it splashes itself out and marks the spot. This is proof of great conscientiousness on the part of the G.W.R., and I am glad to see it because it was on the G.W.R. that the copy for this page went rattling away to Penzance last week. I do not blame the railway, for it was only to be expected, since the MSS. contained the devil's palindrome. This I received not at first hand from the author, but at second hand, through an Italian Benedictine monk.

#### ANIMAL LIBEL.

The world is a vale of tears, a place of pilgrimage, and the scene of much sorrow, but there is at any rate one thing in its favour, it is a place as at present arranged in which it is impossible for human beings to libel dogs. Such at any rate is the decision of a French court of law, and I hope it will be upheld in British courts. But I am sure a great many people will think this is a monstrous injustice, saying how sensitive dogs are, and how much their reputations matter to them. In the English villages where threats of slander actions are the great new hobby, a fruitful field for threats of litigation would be opened up if dogs were given their right to sue.



I see that in Hungary there is to be a town called Lilliput, founded by and for midgets, where they can live normal lives, as carpenters and gardeners and clerks, instead of thinking that the only calling open to them is that of public entertainers. The founder of the town, himself a midget, says he is tired of being or show, and tired of living in houses and towns so much too large for him. It is, perhaps, a reasonable point of view, and yet how many ordinary-sized people wish they could live merely by letting themselves be looked at. They have to make themselves so very much fatter or uglier than they are before they begin to have a commercial value. Great ugliness, in addition to qualifying people for a restful life on exhibition, has some minor advantages. It is a great way of keeping railway carriages to yourself, supposing you are so misanthropic as to want to do so. I remember reading in George Robey's memoirs his device for keeping the carriage to himself. He stuck wheelks all over his face, and nobody tried to come in.

#### OLD AND USEFUL CHINESE PROVERB.

Kiss the hand you cannot bite.

#### POSTMEN WITH INITIATIVE.

I see a postman has just been celebrating the completion of 125,000 miles, five times round the world, spent in delivering letters, and he is well pleased with the way he has spent his time, taking it rather on trust, with a beautiful simplicity of nature, that the world is the better and the happier for his letters, although he has no idea, being an honourable man, what was inside stuck-down envelopes. It is a trial to postmen that all the better letters re, by an evil continuing coincidence, always stuck down. It was probably this feeling that was responsible for the behaviour of an Argentine postman some years ago, who just got tired and went straight to his own home every day with his entire bag. When he was discovered, I remember, there were seventeen thousand undelivered letters in his house, a year's accumulation, and he explained that he had intended, more or less, to deliver them all some day, but a convenient day never seemed to come along, and he began to get frightened there would soon not be room for him in his own house.

#### PEN-AND-INKERS.

We all have faces not our own which we will carry with us forever, and there dwells with me the red and angry face of a man in a bowler hat, who accosted me in a railway carriage some little while since. I was listening to an acquaintance, fresh from

Nigeria and full of its difficulties, and after a time Bowler Hat could stand it no longer. "And what about this country?" he said. "Doesn't this country want thinking about and talking about? What's happening to it? It's being given over to pen-and-inkers. Look at Whitehall there, building after building filled with pen-and-inkers. And take it from me, pen and ink never made anything useful.

He had a good deal more to say in rebuke of the ever-growing bureaucracy, and he foresaw the day when Government offices would reach, he thought, from London to Land's End (for he was a West Country man), eating up the good earth with temples for inkpots and pens.

#### DE MORTUIS NIL.

It is often said that a man can no longer quote Latin in the House of Commons. This is what happens if you do :—

Mr. Wise : ". . . Nobody is asking this country to be meek, but I will finish with one quotation from an ancient poet, Ennius."

Mr. Gallacher : "He is as dead as you are."

#### THE TYRANNY OF DATES.

I heard, the other day, of an Englishwoman in St. Sophia saying she was particularly interested in the Mohammedan influence on a building. When she was told it was built and consecrated some eighty years before Mohammed got into his stride, that what she was looking at was 540 and Islam 620, she said, "Oh, well, if you are going to start talking about dates, I am not interested; you can prove anything by dates."

#### PITY THE POOR POTATO.

Isaac Taylor begins his *Natural History of Enthusiasm*, and what a work it is, with the sentence : "Some form of beauty engendered by the imagination or some semblance of dignity or grace, invests almost every object that excites desire." I thought of this when I read of the housewives who are refusing to accept into their house as even temporary guests, potatoes that are ugly in shape. It is hard luck on the potatoes thus to be cheated of their final destiny, which is to be eaten rather than thrown, merely because of their looks. They make no pretensions to beauty, living very retired lives before coming out into society. They have already had to get used to innumerable snubs, being treated as a vegetable apart, and declined, often with horror, because they will not co-operate in the present ridiculous feminine craze to be extremely thin. The anti-potato drive is now apparently taking

the offensive, and potatoes are being ostracized for being ugly in themselves, as well as the cause of ugliness in others. About their best asset now is their name, which is a really striking one.

#### PATIENCE CORNER.

“Patience, fleas, the night is long.”

—*Old Spanish Proverb.*

#### BETTER TRIPE-SELLERS.

The Paris authorities are taking a strong moral line about tripe. No one, in future, is to be allowed to sell it, declares the Prefect of the Seine, who is unworthy, and upon whom the Police records cast grave reflections. Immoral conduct, that uncomfortably wide phrase, is a complete barrier, although lighter terms, some six months or so in prison, will not necessarily disqualify. It is rightly held by the powers in Paris that to sell tripe is a privilege, tripe being the excellent thing it is. No one ought to have the pure pleasures of the table, which the French know all about, marred by any doubts, however momentary, about the virtue of the seller. The man of delicate palate may also be the man of scruple, whose mind troubles him as he wonders whether he has bought from the most virtuous man, and how the good money he has paid away is going to be spent.

It was one of the many advantages of a simpler agricultural economy that, pedlars apart, men knew in the main all about the people from whom they did their small buying. They could consider not only whether they themselves wanted the articles, but whether the money would be passing into good hands. To-day is extraordinarily difficult to judge, and men have to forego this art of the consumer's surplus of enjoyment. No one will grudge tripe this further excellence, and those who eat it with onions can also reflect that onion sellers are men who deal in a commodity which makes its presence known with singular candour and force and the profession instinctively repels those with anything to hide

#### NOVELISTS.

Modern authors, particularly novelists, seem, when I talk to them, continually torn by the feeling that they cannot slog away if they live in London, but if they retire to a remote county they will lose touch with the literary world, and not be reviewed at all or be treated summarily, because nothing keeps a reviewer up to the mark like expecting to run into the authors. The most com

petent novelists go into complete retirement while writing, and then are to be met all over the place as their book comes out. I believe there are some twelve hundred practising novelists at work in England, but that the number of novels published every year is only two a day. I remember a rich young Jewess of St. John's Wood telling me what a trial she found it, that whereas she needed three novels a day to get through her time, only two were published, and she was only saved by the talent and industry of the French. She would not consider filling in the gaps with old books, written, she said with distaste, by dead people, as though that made them unwholesome and rather dangerous. It is a very good thing for authors that women, who do most of the current reading, have a prejudice against anything old, or modern authors would be left to compete on their merits with the previous centuries.

#### CALAMITIES.

There is a book I am very fond of recommending to young people with an itch to turn author, the elder Disraeli's *Calamities and Quarrels of Authors*. Open it anywhere in the first or calamities section, and the page headings are a feast of salutary warnings. "Disappointments disordering the intellect" is one, and "The Miseries of Successful Authors" and "The Illusions of Writers in Verse," a well worn theme this, are on the menu. Then there is Ockley, of Queen Anne's day, whose history of the Saracens was one of the first of the famous Victorian Bohn volumes.

#### THE GOOD EARL OF OXFORD.

Ockley thought he had found a patron in the Earl of Oxford, who had him to a meal, where his table manners let him down so badly that he was struck with horror and amazement to hear rumours of how very rude he had been. But, alas, having supped well, he could not in the least recollect whether he had been offensive or not. The Earl of Oxford overlooked awkwardness at table, and continued to be prepared to be written to, and some years later a letter from Ockley's widow to the Earl lays before him the deplorable situation of her affairs. "If," says Isaac Disraeli, "the letters of the widows and children of many of our eminent authors were collected they would demonstrate the great fact that the man who is a husband or father ought not to be an author. They might weary with a monotonous tale, and usually would be dated from the gaol or the garret."

Léon Daudet shared one thing with Clemenceau, whose life he was to write—that pre-war nationalism which was so conscious of being pre-war. He recalls a conversation he had with Clemenceau, shortly before his death, in which Clemenceau asked leave for an indiscreet question, which was: “How is it that you, who have studied both medicine and philosophy, still believe in the divinity of Jesus Christ? It is extraordinary.”

Daudet’s reply was: “What is astonishing is that you, at the end of a life such as yours, made up of reflection and suffering, should refuse to admit so simple a fact.”

“Simple?” said Clemenceau, “but if God existed . . .”

“Life exists,” replied Daudet, “you recognise that, even if you cannot see it. At least you are conscious of your blood, your muscles, your eyes—but not life which nevertheless manages to control those things.”

“But what,” asked Clemenceau, “do you make of philosophy?”

“And what,” replied Daudet, “do you make of St. Thomas and the theologians? They are great philosophers, who based themselves on the human reason.”

Whereupon Clemenceau broke off the argument by shaking Daudet’s hand warmly, and saying:

“Anyhow, you and I have one faith in common: France.”

#### LEARNING MADE EASY.

A character in Leslie Henson’s new show, “Running Riot,” says a memorable thing:—

“To copy out of one book is plagiarism.

To copy out of three books is research.”

I have several friends who dignify with the name of research reading a French book or two, and indeed, any kind of reading as opposed to looking in their heart and writing what they find there, a less laborious but more risky business.

#### FOR PRAISERS.

If you are the sort of person—and these words are particularly addressed to bishops—who wishes to do a lot of praising out of goodness of heart, and to help the human animal along, you will be glad to know that you can now buy a chart which gives you “brilliant word-power” through the use of Hartrampf’s vocabularies which, says the leaflet, “will enable one to clothe beauty with fascinating charm and dazzling brilliance.” This is not an advertisement for clerical evening dress, but an aid to eloquence in which, grouped in printed circles, every sort of synonym can be

found, verbs and adjectives and nouns. There are three columns of such words at the disposal of the would-be Praiser. But equally, says the booklet, the vocabulary of sin-crime is gratifyingly easy and surpassingly exhaustive, and the illustrations for using words in this group correspond to those illustrating praise. You can also obtain a Cosmological Phenomena chart, which explains the importance of plan and of history.

#### A WEEK AT MARGATE.

Among the books of the 1826 season was *A Week at Margate*, which has as its epigraph :—

“You may stay out a week, taste the pleasures all round,

“And carry home change from a Note of Five Pound.”

But even more attractive is a book advertised on the fly-leaf of this volume : *Smiles for All Seasons*—or Mirth for Midsummer, Merriment for Michaelmas, Cheerfulness for Christmas, Laughter For Lady-Day. The book consists of Parlour Poetry and Drawing Room Drollery ; it supplies Solace for Summer, Amusement for Autumn, Wit for Winter, Sprightliness for Spring :—

“In the Waiting-Room, Chamber, the Cabin, or Chaise,  
Low Spirits to sink, and Good-humour to raise.”

A morning paper which evidently believed in Health through Joy, proclaims : “This Book should be in every SHIP’S CABIN, and on the table in the waiting room of every MEDICAL MAN.”

#### ETHELWULF AND ALFRED.

I have been reading some of the earliest history books, *The Feudal Manuals*, which were read in the thirteenth century, and I have been much impressed with the fine figure which was cut in the eyes of the Norman French aristocracy by my two favourite Kings—Alfred, and his less splendid, but more engaging father, Ethelwulf. There were pages about them in these feudal manuals, saying what fine fellows they were : Alfred, more punctual than his father, and the patron king of alarm-clock makers ; but Ethelwulf, for ever memorable for his great benefactions to the Roman clergy, to whom he gave enormous sums to keep a light burning in honour of St. Peter, and a different light for St. Paul. He gave the Pope money, quite additional to the Peter’s Pence which he founded. Perhaps there was some vanity in all this, and he wanted them in Rome to see what a terrific place Wessex was, where money was of no account. In later days the Wessex dioceses have been among the poorest in England, and their Bishops must say “No, you had all we could spare round about 850.”

#### AND OTHERS.

"The counsel of a woman is not worth much, but he who does not take it is worth nothing."

"I wept when I was born, and every day shows why."

"'Will pay' is a fine bird, but 'cash down' sings."

"To steal the pig and give away the feet for God's sake."

"It is in the best cloth that one is the most deceived."

"There is no worse abbot than the one who has been a monk."

"Other people's worries kill the ass."

"He who denies the cat skimmed milk must give the mice the cream."

"Laws follow the roads that kings wish them to take."

#### CRISIS WISDOM.

Last week an old lady asked a friend of mine : "Is the death ray the same as the Maginot Line ?" And I heard also of a cook in the country whose comment when she heard that there were to be negotiations at Munich was : "What, more negotiations ? Well, let's hope that nothing will come of them," from a general sense that the word meant trouble. And then there was the father of another friend. His son found him turning over an atlas in the library, and saying : "Where is this place, Czecho something, that there's all this trouble about it ? I can't find it anywhere on the map of Europe." His son saw that the map was a pre-war atlas, and explained to him saying : "Father, since that map was made there has been a great war, and they have changed all the boundaries." Whereupon his father abandoned it in disgust, saying "Changed all the boundaries, have they ? Well, of course, if they go doing that, it reduces the whole thing to a bally farce."

#### BE KIND TO OUR ANCESTORS.

It is customary to abuse the Japanese these days, but there are one or two marks of kindness to be credited to them. Having failed to secure for monkeys, on their merits, all the consideration which might be shown to them, the Japanese have launched an adventitious appeal, and a notice board by one monkey haunt in Japan, now reads "Be kind to our ancestors." This would not answer in England, where it would be much better to say "Be kind to animals," because the word animal is a more grateful sound on the English ear than the word ancestors. In the English view, ancestors are people to boast about or to forget about, but not to cultivate. They had their innings and it was not a bad one, and they cannot be represented as deserving pity, and in any

country where the sense of property is so keenly developed, most of the well-to-do know they would possess nothing if their ancestors were not firmly dead.

## FOUNTAIN PENS FOR MEDALS.

The other kindly change in Japan is the increasing popularity among the ordinary troops of fountain pens instead of medals as rewards for bravery in the field. The fountain pen has many advantages over the medal. It enables the brave man to write down his brave deeds at the time, instead of leaving them to be free copy for somebody else. The world of letters must rejoice at this notable advance in the territory of the sword, and the higher standard of education which is now normal in the British Army should make a fountain pen an essential part of every soldier's knapsack.

## \* DIFFICULTY OF PLEASING EVERYBODY.

A waiter in Poland, where tips are abolished, annoyed by the persistent attempts of a satisfied hotel visitor to give him a gratuity, brought an action for defamation of character. The visitor got out of the difficulty by offering a public apology and paying costs.

## PERFECT NUMBERS.

Perfect numbers are those which are equal to the sum of their divisors, unity, or one, included, and of course the number itself excluded. Now the first perfect number is 6, for  $6 = 1 + 2 + 3$ . The next is  $28 = 1 + 2 + 4 + 7 + 14$ .

The following is the complete list of the twelve perfect numbers :—

- (1). 6.
- (2). 28.
- (3). 496.
- (4). 8128.
- (5). 33550336.
- (6). 8589869056.
- (7). 137438691328.
- (8). 2305843008139952128.
- (9). 2658455991569831744654692615953842176.
- (10). 191561942608236107294793378082303638130997321548169216.



- (11). 13164036458569648337239753604587229102234723183869  
43117783728128.  
(12). 14474011154664524427946373126085988481573677491474  
835889066354349131199152128.

This last number is a perfect number in another sense. It is, by a coincidence, the exact figure of the combined circulation of the Catholic Press in this country following last Sunday's special Press drive.

#### COFFEE'S EARLY STRUGGLES.

All of us who lightly drink cups of coffee, taking it for granted as a drink against which nothing very bad can be said, ought to know that coffee had a great battle to win its footing. When it got to France in the seventeenth century the wine growers hated it, not merely as a competitor, but as a Mohammedan. This was the drink of teetotal Islam, muscling in on the territory of Christian wine-drinking France. Coffee began as something you could only get from a chemist with a doctor's prescription, and when the Marseillais began drinking it without prescriptions, the doctors roundly declared it to be poison, and a doctors' meeting debated whether the use of coffee was harmful to the inhabitants of Marseilles. I have been reading the fine speech of M. Colomb, in Marseilles Town Hall, when he roundly declared that it was a dangerous drug, not worthy to be named in the same breath with fermented liquor, with wine. If its demerits, he said, needed further illustration, let them reflect that Europeans had learned about it from Arabs, and Arabs from goats and camels. But in spite of the doctors, the French went ahead and learned how to make coffee and have made it with considerable distinction ever since.

A man who played a big part in this was the great Elector's physician, a man with the name Cornelius Buntekuh. One of his favourite prescriptions for a sick person was a hundred cups of tea. Buntekuh means brightly coloured cow.

#### IN NUMBERS, FOR THE NUMBERS CAME.

One of the key positions in modern government is to be a census official, especially if your country has minorities. Particularly flagrant were the old Hungarian officials, thirty years ago, who loved to devise ways of entering as Magyars all sorts of Slovaks and Croats and Serbs and Roumanians. A favourite dodge which has been used pretty well everywhere, has been to make a

knowledge of the language, in this case of Magyar, essential for all sorts of employment, and then because the Slovak, or whoever he was, spoke Magyar, to pretend he was one. In 1910 there was an amusing banquet in Budapest, and the Minister of Education proposed the health of the chief censor, after the census of 1910. The censor was a civil servant who was also a poet, like Austin Dobson or Humbert Wolfe, and the Minister's speech went like this: "Our honoured colleague combines in himself the poet and apparently the most prosaic statistician. But this incompatibility is only apparent, for having collaborated with him for many years, I know that his acute mind has enabled him to introduce into the figures of his statistics a similar sentiment, to arrange these figures in such a way that the poetry of patriotism is apparent in them at the first glance."

#### THE TOO HUMBLE BUSINESS MAN.

In America, there is a very handsome magazine called *Fortune*, which a Canadian friend of mine presented to me as a Christmas present three years ago for a year, and has renewed ever since. The Editors of *Fortune* have set themselves the task of saving the American business man from that overdose of humility which holds him back. They explain that the record of American business is something much under-rated. The American business man "has never got around to believing that the industrial achievement of the U.S. might equal in historical validity the æsthetic achievement of Athens, or the political achievement of Rome, or the religious achievement of the Middle Ages." "Business is not just a phenomenon upon the surface of American life; it *is* American life; it is to the people essentially what Conquest or the Church was to other peoples of other ages." But they say sadly, "the arts have drawn little inspiration from Business, and the important elements in the American universities are actually hostile to it." "Business and industry have not created what might be called an American enlightenment," and what is more: "the public-relations job of Business has fallen considerably short of perfection. It has not even induced the people to trust the Business man. The people suspect that behind his promotion copy, behind his handsome ante-rooms and affable receptionists, the Business man is up to something." The late President Coolidge summed it all up when he said that the business of the United States is business. The same pregnant and pithy President also said "Four maxims have made New England great: Wear it out, make it do, eat it up, and do without."

"The moon is dead"—sang Mr. Belloc once—adding defiantly and euphoniously, "I saw her die." This, says Science, which like the police, always gets its man in the end, is altogether untrue, and has not even the value of prophecy. On the contrary the moon has its career before it, and what is more—I paraphrase Sir James Jeans, who knows those parts well—we are going to be on much closer terms in the future. Finally the attraction we exercise on the moon will be so strong that the moon will break into fragments and we shall have not one moon—and what is one among so many of us—but many, and indeed a swarm of minute satellites in a ring, the same as Saturn. There are obviously good nights coming.

#### AMERICA AS GOD'S OWN COUNTRY.

A correspondent sends me word of a small friend of his who, being asked why God was almighty, replied "Because He's a big tough from the West."

#### THE NAME IS SO IMPORTANT.

A correspondent has taken me to task for rudeness to readers by my reference to the "clamours" for a crossword. But there is nothing to be ashamed of in clamouring: widows in particular have scriptural encouragement for being importunate. How would my correspondent have liked the manners of an earlier journalist, W. Spence, at the end of the eighteenth century? He did not call his paper anything as mild, medicinal or memorial as *THE TABLET*—a title chosen in 1840, under the softening influence of the young Queen, I imagine. No, Spence called his paper *Pig's Meat, or Lessons for the Swinish Multitude*. It was a penny weekly, and it seems to have had a good sale—at any rate it ran for quite a time; on the other hand, it did not live to be over a hundred, like *THE TABLET*.

#### FEATHERS IN THEIR BIRETTAS.

"The Jesuits are originally a savage Indian tribe, who emigrated very early in history to Spain *via* Arabia, and settled down in Northern Spain where they were made Catholics. For their savage and unscrupulous fierceness the Popes took them into their service as the Church's vanguard. How disastrous they proved for Germany is clearly shown by the historical fact that it was the Jesuits who urged Charlemagne to the merciless massacre of the Saxons at Verdun." (Extract of a lesson on history in a labour camp in Nazi Germany, sent on to me from the letter of a young German there).

So over the Farm Street confessionals should be placed the real names, Big Chief Laughing Dogma, and Great Chief Whacking Penance.

## DEFINITION.

Journalism: "that wretched profession which is usually deemed the last resting place of broken-down gentility."—*Life of W. Combe.*

## THOUGHTS ON FOREIGNERS.

Here are some sentences culled from that popular Victorian work, *Near Home, or Europe Described*, 1850.

Rome—"This is the capital of Italy, and once it was the capital of the world. It was a wicked city *then*, full of idols and cruelty—and it is a wicked city *now*. Here the Pope lives. He is the chief of all the priests of the Roman Catholic religion. You see why that religion is called Roman. The Popes lives at Rome. He pretends that all he says is right. He says he is like Peter the Apostle; but Peter obeyed the word of God, and the Pope does not. When one Pope dies, another Pope is chosen.

"The Pope has a great church. It is the largest in the world. It is called St. Peter's. Inside there is a large black statue of Peter. A great many people kiss its foot. How much grieved the holy Apostle Peter would have been had he known that people would worship him!"

## AND AT THE END OF A CHAPTER.

Question: What is the religion of the Italians?

Answer: They are Roman Catholics.

Question: What do Roman Catholics worship?

Answer: Idols and a piece of bread.

Question: Would not God be very angry if he knew that the Italians worshipped idols and a piece of bread?

Answer: God is very angry.

## WHAT SAVES THE PORTUGUESE.

Spain and Portugal were equally unfortunate in the judgments they incurred. Of Spain the authoress says:

"Their religion is Roman Catholic. The people are idle, love dancing and dressing, and playing on the guitar, better than working or reading."

While as for Portugal there is only one really redeeming feature :

"But in Portugal everything is worse than in Spain. The people are idle, and do everything badly, excepting they make good wine called Port. That is the red wine you see on the table with the Sherry of Spain."

That phrase "you see on the table" calls up a splendid picture of the assured high standard of living, from which these judgments flowed.

#### THE ART OF LITERARY GIANTHOOD.

Victor Hugo used to hold court in tremendous style, with everybody sitting round, being careful not to speak in case they missed a gem. A man who was present at one of these Hugoworshipping parties told me that suddenly, in the middle of a pause, Hugo exclaimed, "I believe in God"; whereupon one of the court exclaimed, in his turn, "A God who believes in God." Anatole France, according to the very amusing book which his secretary wrote about him, used to have a sort of *salon*, but found it a strain to keep up his reputation. Anatole France was not at all an original mind except in the way he dealt with his post. It used to be brought up to him in bed, and he used to have it dumped, unopened, in the bath. After several weeks the bath would be full of post, and very painfully some sort of clearance and destruction would be accomplished.

#### ENVOI.

Motto for this page (and for all other pages) : "Keep silence about all things, and thou shalt have interior peace."

St. Francis de Sales.  
(Patron Saint of Journalists).

#### THE JUST WAGE.

The French have a nice sense of the value of money and service. There is a story told about Firmin Gémier when he was touring with a horrific play of the Grand Guignol type. Gémier, being off the stage, had condescended to provide the monstrous howling of a wolf which was to shake the audience with terror. At one town, however, he surprised his colleagues by giving no more than a few feeble miaows. When questioned about this, after the play, he indicated the number of the audience and declared that he was not going to waste his magnificent voice on three old women and a child.

I wish I knew more about the monks of Mount Olivet Monastery, of whom I have been reading in the *Nottingham Guardian*, who, so a picture tells me, make it their good work to train backward young men as circus artists. An illustration in the *Nottingham Guardian* showed the Father Superior handing up a hoop to a young tightrope walker on a tightrope in the monastery grounds. The monastic habit, with all its many advantages for would-be conjurors, is full of inconveniences for would-be trapeze artists, and so I imagine monks are content to give their instruction from the ground, trying to show how it should be done. Perhaps the idea originated in the age-old association between hermits and wild animals, so that a father of the desert, when his vow of poverty stood in the way of some good work, could earn a little money by a short tour with his extremely tame lion or basilisk.

#### AT A PINCH.

This engaging speech was made by the opener of the All-Hallows Fayre, in Birkly, by a Wesleyan, addressing a Church of England audience :—

"I count it a very neighbourly act to invite me here to-day. I am an old-fashioned follower of John Wesley, and it has been in the blood of my family for five generations, and at the same time I am one of those who can worship anywhere—in a Roman Catholic Cathedral on the Continent—where our Lord is acknowledged to be the leader."

I am glad that Roman Catholic cathedrals on the Continent are better than nothing. Some of them are not bad places at all.

#### BEST BEHAVIOUR.

I find that in one of the new blocks of flats near the Marble Arch, among the regulations for the tenants occurs the injunction "No religious services or immorality permitted in these flats."

#### RECIPE FOR POPULARITY.

Mr. Belloc has been writing in the *Sunday Times* about clocks and watches, and what a field for craftsmanship they were for three hundred years. His essay reminded me of the attempts I used to make to persuade Father Bede Jarrett to put all his young Dominicans at his new foundation at Oxford on to building a wonderful clock, with devils and Dominicans dodging each other in and out, and revolving in procession as the clock struck the hour. This, I said with confidence, would become in no time the supreme sight in Oxford. The English public loves anything mechanical, and at Wells you can see the charabancs from Bristol full of people who care not anything for the West front and the

Coronation of Our Lady, or the stone in honour of King Ine, the king who found pigs in his drawing room, and renounced the world forthwith, but who stand gladly gaping to watch the knights come out and tilt against each other on the inside clock.

Oxford is a county town and a market town, an industrial centre and now a residential place like Cheltenham, and all these people would crowd into the narrow courtyard of Blackfriars. If the clockwork principles involved are not obscure or difficult, what is chiefly called for is great patience, which is the stock-in-trade of religious orders. Mechanical ingenuity rather than abstract writing is the way to the Englishman's heart. Perhaps a saint will arise who will recruit his order in the garages of England where there is a good deal of scope for repentance and the Dismas touch, and would put them to this sort of work, or perhaps the Monks of Buckfast, with lively and fertile minds, are already completing in one of the Abbey cellars a great clock that is a veritable masterpiece alternating anathemas and benedictions and being full of animated pageantry.

#### PITY THE POOR OLD TORTOISE.

I always feel great sympathy for the poor tortoise, and I welcomed Sir Frederick Hobday's letter, stating that far too many, not very happy tortoises, are made to come to England against their will, and that they find it very cold after the tropics and sub-tropics, and die off quickly. Sir Frederick Hobday, the king of vets, once took me over the Royal Veterinary Surgeons' College, where the museum is full of things the spectator is little likely to forget, and in particular the enormous cannon balls which have a way of slowly forming inside horses' stomachs. I suppose there is a case for bringing tortoises to England, now that so many people live too fast, and nerve specialists want to find ways of inducing them to moderate their tempo. The company of farmyard animals is so good for the nerves, precisely because they are none of them in a hurry, and take their time, but tortoises are even more impressive, but then they have plenty of time to take.

#### THE DEVIL'S PULPIT.

In *The Writer* for October, I find a jolly article on "The First Principles of Copy-Writing," which explains:—

"It is well known that advertisers make for the weak spots in human nature as the easiest line of attack, and the main weaknesses to which advertisers appeal are : fear, snobbishness, sex, laziness, greed. 'Do you' (asks the writer) 'recognize most of the seven deadly sins?'"

I suppose three more unlike poets have never co-operated across the centuries, having quite so little in common with each other, as Boethius, Alfred the Great and Martin Tupper. I think Tupper got the idea of putting Alfred into Victorian English verse about the same time as Tennyson's mind was turning to King Arthur, and I imagine that Tupper, as the author of *Proverbial Philosophy*, was full of envy of Alfred, on whom so many proverbs had been fathered. Anyway he did his best, but the final result is not very inspiring, and is full of lines like :—

So also God hath bounded sea and land.

The fishy kind except at his command

On earth may never swim.

And his command is rarely given.

#### HOW TO PASS THE COLLECTING BOX.

I enjoyed the tale, which was new to me, of the elderly moneylender and the Salvation Army lass. She accosted him in Bond Street in Self-Denial Week, and said "Will you give a shilling to the Lord?"

"How old are you?" said he. And she answered: "Nineteen."

"Well," said the moneylender, "I am seventy-five, so I shall be seeing him before you do, and I'll give it to him."

As most people with money are older than most people who go out begging, this is rather a deadly line in pocket protection.

#### THE PUSEY HORN.

The rent as a theme in letters had its great days in the nineteenth century. The miser's old cry in answer to the metaphysicians "Taxes is true" belongs to an earlier date, and taxes were so low or so indirect in Queen Victoria's days that for the ordinary careful father of a family, anxious each year to save and invest, the rent was the largest single cheque concerning him at quarter-day. To-day the income-tax has usurped that pre-eminence. It was the Victorian rule that a wise man's rent would not be more than one-tenth of his income. It does not rest with him to make the same sort of rule about his income-tax, though the exemptions and allowances make the tax work out at about one-tenth for moderate incomes. But what a far cry is it to the grand days of King Canute when fine estates in the Vale of the White Horse were conferred on the Pusey family, and all they had to do was to blow a horn. I went to see that horn just before it was sold by auction at Christie's because I could not know the good news that it was going to be bought for nineteen hundred pounds by an anonymous benefactor for the Victoria and Albert Museum. Down to 1935 it was in the Pusey family, and when I was in North



Berkshire I used to ask about it and be told that it lived in a safe in Chancery Lane. But in that year William Randolph Hearst was allowed to buy it, to add to that jackdaw's nest that he accumulated at St. Donat's in Wales. It seemed only too likely that in the sale of his collection some other American would carry it off to New York or California, and there is not here any law, as there is in Italy, to prevent historical and artistic treasures from going out of the country. It is a fine long curving ox horn, with some medieval metalwork encircling it. The family's most famous member was the great Dr. Pusey, who had a horn of his own to blow and blew it through a busy lifetime.

The Pusey estates acquired in the eighteenth century the neighbouring farm-house, Lyford Grange, where Edmund Campion was captured in 1581, and it was while this house was part of the Pusey estate that it went down in the world and became, what it has remained, a farm-house.

#### THE USEFUL ART.

I have been reading a book that sold nearly a million copies in America: Dale Carnegie's *How to Win Friends and Influence People*. This is a book of applied psychology by an immensely successful teacher, which primarily aims at teaching American business men how to get more business by getting themselves better liked. It explains to them that people's overmastering inner dream is to feel important, and if you can only make them feel important the battle is half won. A great deal of business results apparently from completely admitting yourself in the wrong, whether you are or not, because then the only way the other man can feel important is not by making an angry speech with which you entirely agree, but by taking the magnanimous line.

#### TOPMEADOW.

At Frances Chesterton's funeral I was told—and had later confirmation—that the Chesterton home at Topmeadow has been left to the Church. It deserved some special fate, for it was not at all an ordinary house, and it sums up in itself so much of G.K.C. It is medieval in centring in a great living hall, with nothing above it, and this reassertion of an older building tradition in the heart of an outer suburb was not designed; it came about as a natural result of his writing and his hobbies. Originally Topmeadow was the building across the road from the first Beaconsfield home, a place to which he retreated to write and where plays were staged. Readers of the Autobiography will recollect how that profound book is constructed round the toy theatre which played so big a part in G.K.'s youth, and which led so early to that analysis of the

imagination as the discoverer of reality, and that search after the nature and meaning of innocence, which is the special burden of the book. As I was standing in that hall, after the body of Frances Chesterton had been laid beside her husband, I felt I was looking at something—at property as the extension of personality—soon to vanish and become a memory, but still waiting, undissolved, but doomed, the source of its vitality gone. The massed books, in a confusion of arrangement, and the Catholic works of art and devotion which crowned them, as, too, the Catholic years crowned their long married life, summed up this story of a Christian hearth and of letters baptised. I had known the house over some ten years, and I was glad that my last sight of it was when it was still alive with a poignant hospitality and the sense of many friends.

Chesterton wrote for his own day, and it was a matter of chance whether he kept copies of his own books, and he worried little enough about being read in the future. But it is likely to be found true, I think, of one particular book of his that it appeared thirty years too soon. It is only in the world of the Marxist and the Nazi that the real meaning of *The Man Who Was Thursday*, and the immediacy and truth of its study of the dual role men play, will be widely understood. When it appeared, conspirators were rare romantic figures, but in great stretches of Europe and Asia now every man is acting a role and misjudging the rest of the world while misleading it about himself.

As for *The Ballad of the White Horse*, it has all the story of our generation in it.

#### WHITE HORSES.

As far as I know no one has ever attempted to buy and transport to America the Uffington White Horse, sod by sod, and he is now safely scheduled as the very ancient monument he is. The Uffington horse easily leads in the White Horse race. The one at Ethandune was changed over and the head cut where the tail used to be in the eighteenth century, and the one at Weymouth is landed with George III on his back. There are smaller, quite modern horses, including a red one in Warwickshire, and I think the total is eleven.

#### THE ART OF HANGING ON.

Life statistics are only likely to confuse those who try to find out how carefully they must watch their step and which are the callings that are best for a long life. There is a writer called Mosso who studied intellectual and physical fatigue, and came to the conclusion that politicians die young, largely through infectious diseases contracted through being so much in each other's

company, or at meetings, and that they die young through depression of the nervous system. But Dr. Legrand says, on the other hand, that politicians do very well, and that it is kings and princes, wise men and churchmen, who are generally the first to shuffle off their coil. He studied all the celebrities of history, leaving out all those who were, in modern idiom, "bumped off" or "rubbed out" or "taken care of," and he found that while the churchmen had more centenarians than any other class, except writers, they were not so good as politicians at getting into the nineties. Inside the category of men of letters he found that political writers and controversialists stood a much better chance of reaching and passing eighty than historians or novelists—indeed most of the novelists are dead before they are seventy. And the historians do not do much better. These conclusions go against the general view of journalism as a short and merry business, a kind of all-night sitting amid ink and drink. When journalists die it is from rushing about as though they were American business men, who are the new kind of infant mortality. Among centenarians' recipes I particularly like the man who wrote to *The Times* thirty years ago to say that he had never during his century taken any exercise at all, never walked for more than ten minutes on end in the open air in his later years, that every day he went to bed at seven, and got up at mid-day, rested on a long chair at two, had two eggs at six, and then went back to bed. He undertook to teach longevity on these terms, and the two sisters of Brillat-Savarin, who were ninety-nine and ninety-eight, only used to get up for two months every year, for the two summer holiday months, when their brother came to stay with them in the country.

#### PANTOMIME UPLIFT AND TRANSFORMATION SCENES.

Mr. Wilson Disher, who knows about these things, points out how extraordinarily humane, and one might almost say "this-worldly," pantomime has become. In the last century when Red Riding Hood was shown at Covent Garden, the wolf ate both Red Riding Hood and Prince Charming, but in a sort of transformation scene there was a glimpse of them both in Heaven, or as it was tactfully called, "The Land of the Blessed." How very surprised everybody would have been if, to live up to the Recall to Religion, that had suddenly happened in this year's pantomime.

#### A FAR FROM GOLDEN MORNING SILENCE.

The great way to the heart of business men is through their hobbies, and there are stories of men who got large contracts because they found out that the other man collected foreign

stamps for his little boy and took care to bring the stamps with them. I think a very good play could be written about business men simultaneously taking this course and each seeking to find out and adopt the hobby of the other. There is one very nice story of one of Dale Carnegie's pupils who decided to be more genial, and began by saying "Good morning, dear," at breakfast, to his wife. She was surprised and rather suspicious, but he gave her to understand that she could count on this as a regular thing, and he went on to say "Good morning" to the elevator boy, and in no time transformed his life and became a different being.

#### THE BRITISH LOVE OF COMPROMISE.

"I don't believe in Hell, but I do think that those who have led bad lives will find it harder to get to Heaven than those who have led good." (A contributor to the *Daily Mirror*).

#### THE FRENCH.

Another invaluable piece of worldly wisdom for the young at the outset of their careers comes from Thiers, or some such Frenchman, who said "I find that it is with the vanity of men that you do best business. You will not do half so well with their cupidity or their ambition." This may be rather truer of France than of England. I am assured there is much less ambition in France, and what there is, is much more modest. The glamour of public life is a much paler thing. Private life has rather more. Napoleon said of the French, who were at that time his world, that "the world is divided into pale-faced men who sit at desks, and red-faced rascals who go up backstairs."

#### SEASON OF ACADEMIC GLOOM.

This is the time of year when panic has set in at the Universities, and all sorts of students have one thing in common, an extreme nervousness about whether they will ever get any sort of job, even if they have not, after all, done so abominably in the examinations. As far as Oxford is concerned I have often reflected what a lot of money could be made by a hard-faced capitalist who would guarantee a minimum salary, with a clause permitting the contract to be cancelled in return for a cash payment. Heaps of young men would sign during a period of no self-confidence, and then something would come their way, and the only obstacle would be the contract they had signed while hope was dead. There are few sounder pieces of worldly wisdom than the dictum "Act in all the great emergencies of life as though you were rich." The world is full of people in uncongenial fields, because they took the first



the no doubt excellent charity whose name is "The London Female Preventive and Reformatory Institution." A lot of these bodies were founded a hundred years or more ago, when people were less careful and considerate and labelled things exactly as they thought of them; and for legal reasons it is, I believe, very difficult to change the name of a charity.

#### LAMENTABLE LACK OF ACQUAINTANCE WITH THE RICH.

The other day a B.B.C. announcer, talking about Dives and Lazarus, pronounced Dives as though it rhymed with lives. He apologized later, I suppose to any rich men who were listening. But such a slip could only happen to a man in whose home Dives and Lazarus were far from familiar figures, and yet whenever there is talk of waste and want, no names present themselves more readily.

#### TOMATOES AND TEMPER.

We are so accustomed to think of the Chileans as a hot-blooded people, quick on the knife, that it is a comfort to learn that what they are really quick on is the tomato. The President of the Chilean Senate has asked for legislation to save public men from being pelted with tomatoes. Yet the tomato is itself a comforting thing for believers in progress, for it has replaced the election egg, and the egg not only hurt more, but was generally, by definition and price, bad, whereas tomatoes, although they do not get classed like wines as "throwing" tomatoes till they are pretty mature, go to meet the human face as rich as ever in essential vitamins. I remember when Lloyd George came down to Oxford, in 1923, he sat round entertaining the young with political tales, and he said that the last time he had found egg on his clothes was the second General Election of 1910. The greatest amount of vegetable throwing I have ever witnessed at a political meeting was in the Corn Exchange at Oxford, at the height of Mr. A. J. Cook's campaign. Vegetables came fast and furious, and the excellent George Lansbury folded his arms like the really Christian martyr he might so easily have been. Skilled tacticians are against throwing things at meetings, because of the opportunity given to the platform to strike heroic or sporting poses. It is much more effective to rustle newspapers, or for a number of men in clanking boots to get up and leave every thirty seconds. If the speaker takes notice of these things he does not look heroic, but rather fussy.

There are no controversial political meetings in Germany now, which narrows the opportunities of the new Ersatz egg.

I liked Mr. Arundel Esdaile's story of the firm which wrote to the British Museum for the advertising rates in the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*. I have sometimes seen the *Anglo-Saxon Review*, a sumptuous affair which Lady Randolph Churchill produced around 1900 to draw England and the States closer together, classified by booksellers among pre-Conquest history. When the *Review* was launched, it was at a time when Englishmen were fond of calling themselves Anglo-Saxons, and liked to think their history, complete with political institutions, began in Frisia and owed little to the Mediterranean. The son of Freeman the historian had not yet gone down, of whom it has been well said that although he does not say in so many words that Harold had played cricket for England, he leaves on his readers the impression that he did. Freeman was a great Liberal, and I think he considered 1066 the first time that political opponents secured power, by dirty election tricks, like pretending to run away, at Hastings.

Mr. Arundel Esdaile said that only fifteen per cent. of the people entitled to free library tickets possessed them, and he does not think very much of the kind of reading the fifteen per cent. do. I once met an old woman who thought that if she took out a book there was an implied undertaking on her part to read it, and as she found it unreadable she did not like to take it back. But librarians are not impelled to conduct viva voce examination and to weed out the people with heads like sieves, who are wasting everybody's time by trying to read at all.

#### THE OUTDOOR TYPE.

The Talmud tells us, or me at any rate, that Methuselah lived out of doors, and when he was around five hundred, an angel was sent to him, to suggest that it might be a good idea if he built himself a house. "Well," he said, "can you give me any idea how much longer I have to live?" "Oh," said the angel, "about another five hundred years." "In that case," said Methuselah, "it is not worth while building a house."

#### A DISCLAIMER.

The *Vegetarian Messenger* is, I see, very anxious to have it made plain that neither Hitler nor Mussolini are really vegetarians, although they may, for selfish reasons of their own health, eat very little meat. But they print the menu of recent meals eaten by both, and they declare that Hitler eats caviare, as well as being rather fond, as he might well be expected to be, of an occasional, pointed, slice of ham. Neither man, explains the *Messenger*, can be considered as sharing the humane ideals of the movement.

All this trouble of the little Baltic States not at all wanting to be guaranteed, and people in the larger countries telling them that they are going to be guaranteed and to like it, recalled to my mind an incident when Augustine Birrell, radiating good-nature in the House of Commons, was saying how much he respected his opponents, and one of them said surlily "We don't want your respect," to which Mr. Birrell replied: "The Hon. Member cannot prevent me from respecting him." In the same way you cannot prevent people guaranteeing you if they are determined to do so.

#### TURKISH UNDELIGHT.

Bond Street, which knows how to look after itself, must have read with a superior curl of the lip the Turkish legislation which rules out wedding presents because Turks have a way of giving much bigger presents than they can afford. A better system is in force in Switzerland, where a book is kept, so that it can be seen exactly how much is owing in return, and the young married couple, or so I am assured but do not believe, work off their presents little by little.

#### WHY HISTORY IS BUNK.

There is plenty to complain about in the way of sensations posters and headlines these days, but nothing has made me jump so violently as a headline in the *Daily Herald*, not in their biggest type, but with news more dumbfounding than any I have yet read, for it announced: "Man Does Not Exist." By the time I had read further, and seen it was all about some one particular man whom the fastidious police want particularly badly, out of all the millions of people there are, the harm was done.

#### IT WAS ALL TIME WASTED.

It has been a bad war for the B.B.C. in as much as the War Office's booklet, welcoming the new soldiers, said they were commencing to rid their minds of all the previous ideas of what life in the Army is like, "Ideas which, as often as not, have been provided by comic papers or radio comedians." It is a reflection on somebody, if, after seventeen years of broadcasting, this emptying of the mind has to be officially recommended.



I have no friends, said the politician, but I find it does not matter, because I can always get along excellently with the enemies of my enemies.

#### THE INELASTIC WEEK.

An advertisement in a Hertfordshire paper said no more than this: "Wanted, two or three mornings a week." Perhaps it is a sigh for the good old days of the French Revolution and the Decadi, or ten-day stretch; or is it a call for a shorter week?

#### BISHOPS' RINGS.

I hear a Bishop from Eastern Europe is now in Rome compiling a history of Bishops' rings, which promises to be the standard work on the subject, and indispensable to all serious students of Bishops. The sovereign virtue of a Bishop's ring is that it shall be enormous. There have been instances of the more mundane of the faithful trying to bite out the stone when it is very large and fine, and when they imagine the Bishop is thinking of heavenly things and unlikely to notice, but it is not necessary for the stone to be really valuable, provided it is large enough to stop the mouth of the faithful. The episcopate is one of the offices, and perhaps the only one, where a very large ring is not flashy or vulgarly ostentatious, because, to borrow the phrase of modern architects, a large ring is strictly functional.

#### THE PEOPLE KEPT IN AWE.

More from "Aubrey's Miscellanies," 1670.

He says the country "then was a lovely champaign, as that about Sherston and Cotswold. Very few enclosures unless near houses . . . in my remembrance much hath been enclosed and every year more and more is taken in . . . since the Reformation, and enclosures aforesaid, these parts have swarmed with poor people. Enclosures are for the private, not for the public good." But how angry Dr. Coulton must have been to read John Aubrey saying "the reverence given to holy men was very great. Then were the churches open all day long, men and women going daily in and out hourly, to and from their devotions. Then were the consciences of the people kept in so great awe by confession that just dealing and virtue was habitual."

Joseph de Maistre, that insufficiently studied thinker, wrote "No sovereign power is strong enough to govern many millions of men unless it is aided by religion or slavery, one or the other."; and "No great people can be governed by the Government."

#### THE USE OF BOOKS.

Those who want evidence that we are going downhill, and sinking from a mental to a physical plane of living, can find gloomy corroboration in a tobacconist in Fleet Street, who is selling fine old books, the contents of which have been cut out to make them into cigarette boxes. But contemporary authors will rejoice. The trade of letters suffers as no other trade suffers from the competition of the dead, especially if they wrote well. Their works endure and pass out of copyright, and so can be sold more cheaply. Lawyers and doctors and dentists have nothing to fear from their predecessors. No one can go to Dr. Arbuthnot or Dr. John Hunter, thinking them better doctors than the G.P. round the corner, but anyone can toss aside the struggling contemporary author and can say "Give me Swift or Fielding every time." The hearts of Fleet Street are accordingly lifted up when they see this blackleg writing from the past finally destroyed, and destroyed in the interests of a hobby, smoking, which does not in the least conflict with, but naturally accompanies, reading. Some time ago the French devised a very ingenious scheme by which publishers were not to be free to reprint classics without paying anybody a royalty. The royalties were to be collected to form a literary fund for pensions for indigent living writers. Thus would the pill of non-recognition be gilded, and the unsuccessful author be saved from the pangs of hunger as well as of mortification at the sight of people preferring Balzac to him, for he would know that from their reading of Balzac came the money for his pension.

#### MERITS OF PRIZE CATTLE.

I found a fine piece in Burke which seems to me particularly apt at the present moment. He says: "Because half a dozen grasshoppers under a fern make the field ring with their importunate chink, whilst thousands of great cattle reposed beneath the shadow of the British oak chew the cud and are silent, pray do not imagine that those who make the noise are the only inhabitants of the field; that of course they are many in number; or that, after all they are other than the little shrivelled, meagre, hopping, though loud and troublesome insects of the hour." The Press to ponder.

Following the lay brother who bows to the telephone, I hear from across the northern border of a very deferential priest. He was heard telephoning to his Bishop, and he began "Is your Grace well?" and showed much preliminary solicitude for the health at the other end. After some minutes, he was heard saying "Is your Grace still well?" This is true concern, born of the knowledge that men are like the grass of the field, and that change is going constantly on in the human frame, and that the telephoner cannot see what sudden changes for the worse may not have occurred. It is more civil to keep on asking.

#### KEEPING FIT.

"For myself, I would not give a snap of the fingers for Protestantism; I would not give a snap of the fingers for Roman Catholicism. But I would give all for a strong, virile, vibrant faith that expresses itself in every nerve and pore of the body and points the way to a high and purposeful aim in life."

Layman's "Church Notes" (in the *Worthing Gazette*).

#### THE LOAVES AND FISHES.

Overheard in the local public-house, near to Ampleforth Abbey. "And they do say that of a Friday the Abbot can turn fish into bread."

#### THE DEVIL'S AUTOGRAPH.

Seeing the great headings in the papers about "*Autografi*" I was reminded of the expedition I made some years ago, in Sicily, in search of the Devil's autograph. It was supposed, according to the old books, to be kept in the sacristy of the Cathedral at Girgenti. It was, said the accounts, an eleventh century document, a full holograph, in the infernal talon, entered into between a canon of the place and Diabolus. I knew that so great a treasure would not be shown lightly to every newcomer, and I ingratiated myself with the sacristan by admiring everything he showed me. There were numerous religious paintings of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, and there were many drawers full of vestments which came out one by one. Finally I could wait no longer and asked outright, in a dog Latin which was found more intelligible than my Italian: "Habes nonne epistolam diaboli?" He changed colour and said it was nothing, but I persisted that it was much indeed. Then he said it was kept locked in a high tower, that it was never shown, and that anyway it was not a letter but only the signature, and finally that it was the sort of signature one would expect its attributed author to have, and with that I had to be content. I felt

convinced that I was among the last to whom the existence of any such letter would be admitted. Once, as the old guide books show, it was a great sight. The next generation will hear nothing of it, but I at any rate was just in time to see a forked tail disappearing through the door. It is as near to sulphur as I have yet been.

Whereupon my correspondent wrote to me as follows :

"The cathedral stands on the highest part of the once luxurious old town, and overlooks in the plain beneath, a trail of about ten magnificent ruins. To reach it I had a long, steep and hot walk.

"The sacristan showed me the various treasures, but when I mentioned the letter he was singularly uncommunicative. Eventually I got out of him that, 'Yes, the letter was up there, in the tower, but no one ever saw it ; in fact, had not done so for many years. The canon in charge of the archives did not go there often—only at inconvenient hours, and he had the key. Perhaps I would come another day ; or even after the week-end' ; when, I suppose, he hoped I would have left the town.

"I decided next day to call on the canon. I waited till he had finished his siesta. He came down to me, and was most courteous, and said he would show me the letter if I could return that evening, as he had an appointment just then.

"So back I went to the lower town for a much-needed cup of coffee. In the evening I presented myself once more. He took me up to the archives, and from a cupboard brought down a heavy, backless old volume tied up with string. It was the 'Processo' for the Beatification of a nun. The letter lay within.

"To describe the writing would be impossible. I have never seen anything with the slightest resemblance to it. The script, the canon said, no one had ever been able to trace. I noticed that any letter which would appear at first sight to be in the formation of a cross, ended by not being a cross, but the 'crooked,' or 'turned cross,' the pagan symbol.

#### OUR SCOOP.

"The nun, he told me, had said in the letter the Devil had promised to cease his violent temptations, from which she was well known to have suffered for long.

"The letter is written on a small sheet of paper, dated August 11th, 1676, and begins, 'IL DIRGLI.' The rest is undecipherable. Half way down the page is the word 'OHIME,' and the rest also undecipherable.

"I was most anxious to copy one or two of the hieroglyphics ; but the canon would not hear of this. He made me sit at his desk and copy the complete letter (a copy of which I enclose).

"When I asked him if many had seen the letter, he said, 'You are the first since your late King George V came here twenty-five years ago, who was also anxious to see it. Before him, no one had for many, many years.'"

So, here, below, for all the truly literate, I print that treasure of Girgenti Cathedral, the Devil's Autograph letter, and if it does not say very much to you, you had better leave well alone and be thankful. I owe it to the kindness of Miss Aileen McClement, who was so much more indefatigable than I have been in tracking it down.

11 Aug 1676      Q. & A.

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We are accustomed to think of the East as the great place for strange bazaars and wonderful bargains, but we need look no further than the small advertisements in the papers to see that bargains can be picked up everywhere. A week or two back an M.P. was offering his services, and inviting offers, and in Wednesday's *Times* I noticed an old French family announcing its pedigree, heraldic arms and ancestral title all for sale. Anyone who wants a coat-of arms dating "from the Crusades, 1088," says the advertisement—but that is a pardonable slip—has but to apply and they are promised illustrious members and superb connections. In the ordinary way when rich men want these amenities, they can only get them through marriage.

In the same issue there is an advertisement which reads "Chess partner available, lady. Terms by arrangement." People who play Chess for money are a recognized feature on Coney Island, where I have played with them myself. There was one man who undertook to beat all comers in under an hour for twenty-five cents. If he had not beaten them he was quite philosophical about it, but as most Americans play Chess like slapdash draughts, he had a very high average of wins.

#### FLY FISHING.

Daniel O'Connell became an extremely skilled and quite untiring cross-examiner, with a great knowledge of the subtuges by which Irish witnesses endeavoured to avoid perjuring themselves and to maintain a verbal truthfulness. There is one story of a witness, in a case where a will had been forged after death, and the witness kept protesting that the testator "had life in him" when he signed. After a time O'Connell noticed that this witness took care never to vary the words "he had life in him," and following up the hint he soon extracted the admission that the life in question was a live fly in the dead testator's mouth. Small wonder that with such an apprenticeship, O'Connell, on whom there were never any flies, was a full match for the English.

#### PUT THIS IN YOUR PIPE.

Non-smokers have this much consolation that they will be annoyed less by cigarette ends in the future, at least I imagine so, if the invention of a Hungarian, by which the cigarette paper is made of tobacco itself, gets universally adopted. This inventor said that he was a non-smoker, but it seemed to him inartistic that paper and tobacco should be joined. He spent £3000 before he succeeded. I always think that non-smokers are the most patient of human beings, because tobacco smoke is, after all, a pretty

aggressive thing. Any other tricksters who changed the colour and thickness and smell of the atmosphere would have to be a good deal more apologetic than smokers, but I suppose they, or I ought in candour to say we, feel that having overcome great vindictive enemies like James I, we are not going to trouble about poor moderns. James I's views on tobacco were wholehearted. He called smoking "a custom loathsome to the eye, hateful to the nose, harmful to the brain, dangerous to the lungs, and the black stinking fumes thereof, nearest resembling the horrible Stygian smoke of the pit that is bottomless." How angry he would be if he walked our streets to-day and saw what was advertised most.

From an American magazine's advertisement columns I pluck this for the delectation of us all :—

"MAN CAN TALK WITH GOD," SAYS NOTED PSYCHOLOGIST.

"A new and revolutionary religious teaching based entirely on the misunderstood sayings of the Galilean Carpenter, and designed to show how we may find, understand and use the same identical power which Jesus used in performing His so-called Miracles, is attracting world-wide attention to its founder, Dr. Frank B. Robinson, noted psychologist, author and lecturer.

"*'Psychiana,'* this new psychological religion, believes and teaches that it is to-day possible for every normal human being understanding spiritual law as Christ understood it, to duplicate every work that the Carpenter of Galilee ever did—it believes and teaches that when He said 'the things that I do shall ye do also,' He meant what He said, and meant it literally to all mankind, through all the ages.

"Dr. Robinson has prepared a 6000-word treatise on '*Psychiana*', in which he tells about his long search for Truth, how he finally came to the full realization of an Unseen Power or force so dynamic in itself that all other powers and forces fade into insignificance beside it—how he learned to commune directly with the Living God, using this mighty, never-failing power to demonstrate health, happiness and financial success, and how any normal being may find and use it as Jesus did. He is now offering this treatise free to every reader of this magazine who writes him."

#### DON'T BE BULLIED.

The same magazine has an article on whether there is any point or not in going to church, and it ends up with some words about joyful persistence, as follows :—

"Must you go to church? Certainly. But pick your church to

suit your own needs, physical, emotional, spiritual. If the religion you select doesn't help you positively, practically, immediately, lift your gaze to wider horizons. Don't abandon anything you have gained, any opportunity to live, give, or receive inspiration. But seek a self-fulfilling religious expression which makes you a better person every day. And cling to that with joyful persistence."

#### HAPPY PHRASE OF MIRABEAU.

The great commercial centuries produced a number of sayings which look at men in the language of merchandise, and are variants of the great metaphor about one's stock being high or low. There was the comment about some conceited fellow, "If only I could buy him at his real valuation and sell him at the valuation he sets upon himself, how rich I should soon become," but the best of all these remarks was Mirabeau on Talleyrand: "He would sell his soul for money, and he would be right, for he would be getting gold for dung."

#### WHAT TO DO WITH YOUR THROAT.

"Exchange Rolls Razor for good Ventriloquism book."  
(Advt.)—*The Exchange & Mart.*

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An acquaintance of mine who is concerned with one of the great picture dailies, told me recently that the secrets of success are now fully understood, that the ordinary woman can only attend to anything for half-a-minute, and likes four different stories to a page; that the smallest personal details take precedence in reader-interest over the most serious public issues; that politics are so immaterial that it is unnecessary for the paper to keep the same point of view through its different pages; and that intrusion into private life and private grief is not at all resented, but sends the circulation up. "People like," he said, "a quick look behind a neighbour's curtain or door, particularly their bedroom door," and he talked of one of his reporters "who will never really succeed with us; he has not got our angle. If we sent him to Germany to interview Hitler, he might bring back an excellent account of everything Hitler said, but he would not find out anything about the colour of Hitler's pyjamas, and that would interest our readers far more than any views." I also asked him why the letters in the picture papers are so peculiarly inane, and he thought it was because the papers encourage their readers to write to them on postcards. Mr. Gladstone achieved great things with postcards, but it is a rare knack.



There is a serial running now in one of the papers, called "Ten Little Nigger Boys." It came into my mind when, one Sunday morning, I found the pile of Sunday papers diminished by one, and learnt that the *Sunday Referee* was dead. Newspapers, which resent the habit in other people, die exceedingly quietly themselves. The reason for this secrecy is that the worst newspaper has, after all, some readers and some goodwill. If it was announced beforehand that the paper was stopping, the readers would feel free to pick and choose among other papers. This way, the first they learn of any change, is when another paper arrives, incorporating the title of their own. Thus are masses of readers transferred, like the dumb beasts they are, with a minimum of loss. But it is rough on the newspaper staffs, who are kept in the dark up to the last moment.

#### SIR FOR PLEASURE.

The cloister has many advantages for those who love hearing the sound of their own names with fine-sounding prefixes like Dom or Father, while Mother and Sister sound rather better than Miss or a blunt surname, which is all that the bulk of mankind can command from most of their fellows. The American psychologist does not mention it, but we are forfeiting, to-day, a great deal of possible happiness through dropping the habit of using Sir more widely in a complimentary way, as the eighteenth and nineteenth century did. At present, Sir is chiefly used in speech either from deference to age or position, or as a way of being unpleasant. Dr. Johnson used it as a way of being pleasant. Americans get much more of this kind of fun than we do, repeating each other's names frequently in the course of their conversations, and setting up a tingling glow.

#### MORE ABOUT PUBLISHING.

Publishers have one clever trick for keeping authors humble. In their annual royalty statements they call the advance on royalties "unearned" until enough copies have been sold to account for it. Many a simple author thinks it his duty to give up authorship, as plainly, in his case, a kind of theft. Men have said to me "I have never yet written a book which has earned its advance. What a lot of publishers have lost through backing a wrong horse like me!" But the more comforting truth is that author and publisher make money side by side. The author is not paid in full before a publisher gets anything, but the publisher is making his own profit while he is also recouping himself for the advance he has made to the author. There is a margin between costs of production and price which allows for both.

Publishers do, of course, lose money on books, when very few copies are sold, but the many young men who are attracted to this calling—although it is a cross between commerce and art, which is parallel in the world of human action to the place of the mule in the animal world—will be comforted to know that the best judges think it impossible to publish a book and not sell one copy. The only case I know of is one of the great University presses which published a work on tapestry, of which no copy was sold, and only two were sent out for review. But it cost forty guineas, and it had been produced at the author's expense. After a time, the edition was sent to him, to give to his aunts on their birthdays. There have, however, been some cases of publishers—but not the best ones—telling authors that no single copy has been sold; the advantage of this simple statement is that it saves so much trouble with book-keeping and accountancy, and it is often, by and large, looked at unpedantically, near enough to the truth.

#### BIRTHS, DEATHS, AND CERTIFICATES OF LUNACY.

The race between stupidity and extinction is one of the chief contests now going on in Britain. It takes longer than Test cricket, and does not move more rapidly. The present score suggests that while we shall all be mentally defective, to put it mildly, three thousand years from now, we shall all be extinct less than two thousand years hence. So sheer non-being will win hands down. I have been reading an entertaining contribution to this controversy called "The Fight for our National Intelligence," and it is perhaps a sign of the times that this book has three introductions, where the Victorian giants would have had one crushing and final one. The author of this study is Dr. Cattell, the psychologist to the Leicester Education Authority, and very alarming he is in this chapter on the Magnitude of the National Decline, because roughly speaking the mental endowments of children are those of their parents, and the more cunning the parents, the fewer children they have. "There are," he says, "thirty per cent. more mental defectives in the next generation, and the growth is to be steady and rapid." The great consolation is that there are more ways than one of being a mental defective; it can be a very agreeable performance, a kind of benign slowness, very gratifying to the rest of the world, who can do all the holding forth. It is noticeable that in the walks of life where incomes are assured, cleverness is quickly found fatiguing, and the path to popularity, especially for women, consists in not being too smart or quick off the mark. But it is very disappointing for the people who rely upon posterity to admire their writings, or to

take their side in their historical quarrels. The suggestion made in this book should be pondered by journalists. The author says there is a fortune waiting for the journalist who will replace the present trivialities with day-to-day news about these great social issues. He thinks the attempt to arrest mental deficiency could be graphically reported, and that the birth columns rather than the street accidents should be "written up." The birth of a third or a fourth child in a good class home should be heralded, not as private, but as public good news. It will very likely be attempted soon by freelances, who will come to the house to write up the "points" of the family as stock.

#### TAILPIECE.

Among recent divorces reported from Reno there occurred the name of a Mrs. Dodge Godde.

#### BAD AS WE ARE . . .

The poor old Middle Ages are having a bad time. The worse we behave in the twentieth century the more mud do we fling at them, and the adjective medieval is applied to every sort of cruelty or oppression, whether it was really particularly characteristic of the Middle Ages or not. I was glad to see someone writing in *The Times* about the expulsion of the Jews by Edward I, when they were allowed to take all their property with them. When he introduced his criminal reform bill, Sir Samuel Hoare, praising Sir Robert Peel, said "In a word he succeeded to a great extent in bringing to an end in this country the medieval conception of punishment. When I say the medieval conception of punishment I mean the system under which imprisonment played a very small part and in which punishment depended almost entirely on sentences of death or mutilation or confiscation." As a matter of history, the medieval centuries relied principally on the fine. I think it is Maitland who says that most Englishmen seem to have got fined about twice a year. Sir Samuel Hoare was talking in terms of rebellious barons perhaps, but even they were very likely to be imprisoned rather indefinitely, though they were also quite likely to make their peace on surprisingly easy terms. The great truth, no doubt unknown on the Labour benches, and not widely known among the Conservatives, is that in all sorts of directions the law became more savage and the number of capital offences was increased in the post-medieval period. The law of forgery was stiffened three times, as written documents became more and more important in commercial life. Sir Robert Peel marked a reaction against the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. The great danger of this rough-and-ready injustice to the Middle

Ages, this ignoring of their character of extreme legality, which makes them so unlike the present age of State absolutism, is not that discredit is turned on the ages of faith, but that the root fallacy of an automatic upward progress is fostered. I suppose most people in this country, if stopped in the street and put to the question, would say that each century was rather pleasanter than the one before. That was the stock Victorian faith. The Archbishop of Canterbury, in an address recently, said how men of his generation had all taken an automatic progress for granted, yet it is a doctrine pretty sharply at variance with the Christian teaching about the natural propensity of humankind to evil, and of the way men walk along the murky highway of human history.

“A-telling o’er their wicked deeds  
As friars tell their beads.”

#### A HOTBED OF CROOKS ?

The part of Sir Samuel Hoare’s speech which I imagine was heard in awed and shamefaced silence was where he said that in 1938 the total number of persons found guilty of offences of all kinds was about 800,000. When you say that nearly a million people come into the criminal statistics you can make the country look a home of criminals, but we can blame most of it on to the motor car which accounts, at a go, for more than half. Dogs are also partly to blame, because among the criminals are those who fail to take out licences for them. A foreign doctor told me that he thought the English are the most criminally minded of all people, because of the activity of their minds, so that they are always thinking of what wrongs they might do and get away with it, whereas the Germans, said he, are not nearly so clever, and concentrate all their minds on obeying instructions. He claimed that the huge vogue of detective stories in this country supported this contention.

#### AGE 12A.

Thirteen is the age apparently at which most offences are committed. Can this be because before people reach that age they have already been told that it is an unlucky number ? I believe, or at any rate I have been told, that in the Middle Ages thirteen was a lucky number, as representing Our Lord and the twelve Apostles, and that it was one of the many sixteenth century changes which made it unlucky, in order to break with the past. There are plenty of hotels which skip it out in numbering the

bedrooms, and go from 12 or 12a to 14, and perhaps we shall see that done with children's ages.

#### LYING WON'T HELP YOU.

There is a pleasant story which is used to explain how language is understood in Eastern Europe, where men are rather more suspicious of each other than elsewhere. It is a dialogue between two Jews travelling by train.

"Where are you going to, Moses ? "

"I am going to Warsaw."

"What a liar you are. When you say you are going to Warsaw it's to make me believe you are going to Cracow. Now I happen to know you really do mean to get out at Warsaw, so why are you lying ? "

#### SIN AT FOLKESTONE.

From time to time we hear complaints, though not, indeed, from Catholics, that what is wanted to give spice to life, is a new sin ; and a successful play was written with that intriguing title. The next best thing is to find new ways of committing the old sins. So some marks must be awarded to the man who has just got himself charged by the police at Folkestone with annoying the Deputy Mayor by walking about in diving boots. They say that Folkestone has never recovered from the War ; others, more pessimistic still, think it never really recovered from the early departure of Mr. Hannen Swaffer, who began his journalism there. Others, again, say "What can you expect of a watering-place, six of whose seven original parish churches are now under the sea ? " This story, too, is contested, but I like to imagine that he diving boots were due to an itch for church attendance for which the town facilities were inadequate.

#### HONORARY REVERENCE.

The American Episcopalians enjoy a freedom and a comprehensiveness which makes the official Church of England look to them of almost Roman rigidity. A step has just been taken, a conferment of honorary Canonries of Washington Cathedral, on a distinguished Baptist and a distinguished Methodist and a Presbyterian. The Methodist is the well-known Dr. John R. Mott. This step is held to be "calculated to break down barriers of denominational prejudice," and the practice of conferring honorary ecclesiastical rank is one which is plainly full of possibilities. There are plenty of amiable, not particularly denominational, clergymen, who would delight to pick up honorary Moderatorships and Archimandriteships, and if politeness goes a

little further, I do not see why purely honorary canonization should not be freely extended to each other among these different bodies. The free interchange of titles of sanctity would plainly do a great deal to break down denominational barriers.

#### THE NEW REVIEWING.

Just before the war, a hopeful young writer arrived at Paternoster Row, with varied samples of his literary talent, to impress the publishers. Among them was a review of J. B. Morton's *The Bastille Falls*. Unfortunately, the publishers at once recognized this as copied straight from the jacket of the book. "Excuse us," they said, "but you did not write this; we did." "I'm awfully sorry," said the writer, and he plainly was, "but you see, the editor of the paper from which I had that book for review did not send me the book; he sold the book and sent me the wrapper, and that was all I had to go on."

This is the new reviewing, and it is making publishers more than ever conscious of their responsibilities as the formers of literary taste.

#### GOLF NOT TO COUNT AS WORSHIP.

Dr. Winnington Ingram once told us of the man who told him, I have given up Church for golf. "No one," the Bishop is reported to have said, "is keener on golf than I am, but that is going too far." This theological ruling about precedence will cause much heartburning, for it is certainly easy enough to look on golf as a spiritual exercise, tempering a man in the furnace of his own wrath.

#### ORIGINAL RESEARCH INTO CATHOLIC WRITERS.

It is said in America that they are afraid the subjects for post graduate theses will be exhausted within a measurable time, now that every college man or woman plays with the idea of writing a thesis as an honourable way of treading water and waiting for a start in life. One quite popular subject with Catholic students is what they dignify with the name of the Catholic Literary Revival. The collectors of first hand and original material turn up in person from time to time, and the season is now opening. But the most agreeable memories I have in this field are of a French Abbé who came to see me in *The Times* Office and asked me abruptly what I was doing. I said I was giving my mind, with frequent rests, to the study of the British Empire, and was at the time writing about Canada. With marked disappointment he asked had I no literary interests,

"Yes," I said, and I pointed to a pile of nice books, "I am to review all those; works of humour," I explained, "des livres comiques."

"Ah," he exclaimed, "maintenant je comprends. Vous vous occupez des livres comiques du Canada."

It sounded a useful and well-spent life, and he went away smiling.

#### ANOTHER COLOUR QUESTION.

"'Never,' it is being said at Ottawa and at Washington, 'can we tolerate a Red North Pole!'"

It is a place not for Reds, but for Whites or Blues.

#### THEY SEEM TO LIKE IT.

In Harold Nicolson's *Life of Dwight Morrow*, the story is told of his meeting ex-President Coolidge, who invited him, as a life-long friend to share his bedroom in the hotel. They did not talk the whole night through, for that was never silent Cal's way. But what he did say was to the point: Morrow was then running for the Senate, and Coolidge said: "Don't speak more than you have to, but when you do speak, talk about patriotism; they seem to like it."

#### STUBBS AS A SETBOOK FOR CALLES.

Of Morrow I have a lively recollection which bears out a remark of Harold Nicolson's that one of the few weak spots in his remarkable intellectual equipment was a kind of mild, but real vanity, about his historical reading, and the universal applicability of the historical approach. He was telling me of his difficulty when Ambassador to Mexico in getting President Calles to take a calm view of the Church, and he said that what really made an impression was his explaining to Calles that this was not, as he supposed, a trouble special to Mexico, but one of the oldest sources of friction in European history. It was Stubbs' *Constitutional History of England* which did the trick, when Morrow read great chunks of it dealing with the Constitutions of Clarendon aloud to Calles, who then asked how these matters had generally been composed in the past. Undergraduates who venerate insufficiently the name of Stubbs, should know that in Mexico, too, he made his mark.

#### POVERTY AND NARROWNESS.

Mr. H. G. Wells made a strange address about Palestine as a place in which nothing really important began. This remark has naturally been commented on in a good many quarters. Mr. Wells

met Christianity in a very unattractive form in his boyhood, but that is not really much of an excuse for the extraordinary lack of understanding he has always displayed not merely of the claims of revelation, but of the formative work of a great religion in making a civilization. In one of his earlier books there is a passing reference to the early Fathers of the Church and "the poverty and narrowness of the circle of ideas in which they thought." I imagine Mr. Wells fretting and fuming at an early Church Council that so much time should be occupied by discussions on God and the soul, time which in his view should obviously have been spent in arranging for that interplanetary communication in which his thoughts find their goal. He would have had a great deal more respect for Jerusalem if it had been a place from which ascents to the moon had been attempted, and he cannot understand so many people not seeing that that is the essential destiny of the human race, and the purpose of man's creation. Reading his address, I feel it would have been better had he been more courageously outspoken. He limited his remarks to the waste of time involved in Old Testament history, but he must know that it is around the New Testament that the real battle will be fought, and when he talked of ceasing to perplex another generation with stories of the Flood, I imagine that it was correct for "Flood" to read "Resurrection."

#### "THE FRAGMENTS THAT REMAIN."

I was reminded of Coolidge on patriotism when reading the last volume of Earl Baldwin's *Service of Our Lives*, the latest volume of his speeches. Earl Baldwin is not one of those men who, having been politicians from adolescence, have never read widely, but he does not seem to have cast his net widely enough. There occurs in one of his speeches on a great occasion, just after the Coronation, a truly astonishing passage. When speaking of the Empire, he uttered a warning against too much definition, and then went on to say it was the attempt to define which smashed the Christian Church to fragments soon after its inception, "and it has never really recovered from that." I suppose this sort of impression is derived from reading Lecky and Gibbon, who had no eye for the essentials, and could not appreciate the great work of the Councils. The Arians lasted some two or three hundred years, and held a good deal of Europe, but even they did not smash the Church to fragments.

Of course the statesmen of the British Empire, if they are caught defining their terms too closely, deserve all the reprobation that will come their way, but the Church is hardly a parallel case.



I do not think that the Royal Empire Society, even, would claim that the British Empire had a supernatural revelation to safeguard and hand down, although the *magnum opus* of one notable imperial figure, Mr. Lionel Curtis, might be summed up as holding that the New Testament is essentially the prologue to the Statute of Westminster.

#### THE HOLY PLACES.

I have been hearing of a French Abbé whose simple heart is elated at the many signs of the growth of Catholicism in England. What has particularly struck him, he told a friend of mine, was the way the streets in England were now beginning to bear religious names, in marked and painful contrast to the Rue de la République, and Place Victor Hugo, to which he is so well accustomed. The other day, he said, he received a publisher's catalogue from Paternoster Row, that most edifying of addresses, and a little later he heard about Amen Corner.

#### THE ORDER OF FRIARS TICKETED.

I see the *Popolo d'Italia* makes the suggestion that every important railway station in Italy should have a chapel, where Mass can be said for the convenience of travellers, who either must start early or have time between two trains to do their religious duties. In Germany a few stations, such as Frankfurt, allow priests to celebrate, on request, for the benefit of travellers in a hurry, and for railway employees; but the Italian Press is urging the practice as a permanent feature of Italian railway stations. The proposal was first made for the Milan station, which on Sunday mornings deals with an exceptionally heavy traffic; but now the Roman Press is of opinion that every station in Rome should offer the same facility to the many travellers and pilgrims who alight at hours when they find it difficult for various reasons to go to church at once and be in time for the services in the city.

Preachers on the trains with special carriages labelled not "smoking," but "sermons," seems to be the next necessity. The mendicant friars turned up on the roads when roads were the one means of travel, and an order of railway friars with season tickets is only awaiting a Bradshaw-minded founder.

#### THE SIMPLEST WAY.

I have just heard of a publication which must be about the easiest to edit of any. It is a Chinese monthly, and the only difference between the successive numbers is that the date is altered. The editorial contents, which are of quite high order,

remain the same, year in, year out. This does not matter, as the magazine has no circulation. It lives on its advertisements, which are obtained from foreign firms who are told, and often believe, that it has thirty thousand eager Chinese women readers. What brought its methods into the unwelcome light of day was that an American firm in its advertisement offered free samples, and was prepared for an enormous demand, and was very much surprised at receiving no requests at all.

#### HERBERT MORRISON.

Herbert Morrison had a considerable success at Bournemouth in his speech against the United Front. I realized his particular talent as a speaker when he came to a literary dining club of which I was a member. Ordinarily guests are expected to endeavour to amuse their hosts, but Morrison gave them a lay sermon and made them relish it. I suppose he could see at a glance that they were a pleasure-loving company, because he framed his argument that the only way to be happy is to do something which you think useful, regardless of whether it brings in money or not. He quoted a good deal of the *Rubáiyát* and told the Club how much pleasure it had given him and his companions when they were young men to know that this atheistic poem had to be accepted as a classic by the well-to-do and the educated. I don't myself consider the *Rubáiyát* atheistic. It is the poem of a man conducting a sit-down strike underneath a bough, against the Almighty. But I thought the allusion an interesting sidelight on what must have been the very secular ethos of the London Labour Party in its early days.

#### THE BIBLE MADE READABLE.

There are few phrases more comfortable on the tongue than that "the wheel has come full circle." It has a much finer ring than "I told you so," and gives a sense of brooding destiny. It now seems applicable to the world of books and book clubs. The readers' circle has been formed to draw attention to books which were insufficiently appreciated when they first came out. Most authors know how easily that fate may befall a book, and publishers now have one more hope of saving from remaindering or pulping, particular books. One book, however, was plainly ineligible for the attention of the readers' circle. Whatever else may be said against the Bible, no one can say it has not been read. It has, however, been notoriously read, not just as literature, in spite of the late W. L. Courtney's *Literary Man's New Testament*, so Messrs. Heinemann brought it out as literature in the hope of giving it a new lease of life. It had every advantage. It

was edited and arranged by an American literary man, Ernest Sutherland Bates, and it even had something which would have gladdened the heart of Moses, an introduction by Mr. Laurence Binyon. If anything can make Adam and Eve convincing characters, it should be the sponsorship of these well-known writers.

#### CONFETTI INSURANCE.

An ingenious Dean, of Bocking, in Essex, has added one straw more to the deterrents to matrimony. He has announced that bridegrooms getting married at his church will have to deposit five shillings, which they will get back if no confetti is thrown. It is a stern measure, because the Dean himself declared that usually the throwers of confetti are not invited, but the self-invited guests. What, then, can a bridegroom do to prevent the women who attend every wedding and join in with a little gay sprinkling?

#### THE ORGANIZATION OF GLOOM.

Mankind has long suspected that a grievance need not be altogether a source of sorrow. Grievances are nursed and aired, and thrive. But it is only in our own day that the man with a grievance has had the chance to become a social asset. Now, however, he can join one of the many Sick and Sorry Clubs which have sprung up in the wake of the great depression. Candidates have to prove a real grievance, some outstanding piece of misfortune, and merely to be unhappily married is not generally allowed as a qualification for fear of swamping. Once elected, however, a member finds there is plenty of fun to be had. Clubs meet in graveyards and wander slowly round; they meet in the evenings to sit beside the fire and tell sad stories of the deaths of kings; and there is a sweepstake on the official death-rate for the year. Readers of Thomas Mann's *Magic Mountain* who remember something of the fierce competitiveness of the consumptives in the sanatorium to be as ill as possible, of the *cachet* that went with extreme disease, have a parallel for what goes on in Sick and Sorry Clubs. The members describe to each other what the members of their families are like, and how much more has to be endured than ever came the way of Job. Self-pity is not much encouraged in the brutal everyday world, but it, too, has found a sanctuary, and very useful it is to be able to cut short tales of woe by saying shortly that the Club is the proper place for such revelations. What is so particularly attractive to the members is the knowledge that there is nothing at the back of the minds of those who tell them tales of woe, no expectation of being actively assisted; the tellers of sad tales know that they are talking always to people as much the victims of misfortune as themselves,

well placed, indeed, for offering sympathy, but preoccupied with their own troubles and ill-placed to help.

#### BEFORE THE MASONIC INFLUENCE?

There is an interesting book which came out, like so many particularly interesting works, around a hundred years ago, *The Memoirs of Mrs. Papendiek*, whose husband was a musician at George III's court. She tells the story of the king's insanity, how he could not be left day or night and how the nerve of one of the four footmen who had to be with him, failed. Very well, he was told, if you let us down now, your prospects in the Royal service are over. He persisted that he could not stay with the king, and he resigned. But he had a wide acquaintance with his fellow servants, so he started a grocer's shop near the palace. Mrs. Papendiek, writing many years after, appends the note that his shop is now the well-known grocery shop of Fortnum.

#### GUIDES TO HEALTH.

I have never understood the widespread habit of putting a plate on the door saying not merely "No Hawkers," which is intelligible enough, but "No Circulars." Circulars are presents which do little harm and accept any ill usage, and I cannot think that the houses which display this prohibition really want to be deprived of the variety and the new vistas to which circulars can introduce the occupants. My letter-box last week brought promises of both health and wealth. This was the health:

"Wouldn't you give £20 to have a Handsome Healthy Big-Muscle Body? Certainly you would! Any red-blooded young man would *if* he had the £20. But I know how things are these days and here's what I'll do for you! Don't send me £7, the original price of my Dynamic Tension Course, *don't* send me £5 or even £3. All I ask is *one* pound, and I'll send you my Complete Course at once.

"I believe the best way to advertise the wonderful results of my raining is to have my students tell their friends of their progress and show them their massive chest muscles and big, powerful, bulging biceps. Also I know my pupils are all proud to exhibit their new power by doing feats of strength, such as tearing telephone books, bending steel bars and numerous other astounding stunts."

#### GUIDES TO WEALTH.

The same post brought a hardly less attractive letter from a bookmaker, full of promises, saying "You will like the accuracy of our accounts," which seemed to me by no means certain, and

finishing up by saying modestly : "When we have sent you our rules you can bet with us as seldom or as frequently as you wish." It was a delicate thought of a bookmaker to put "seldom" first, but he expects it to be frequently, for he encloses a specimen account for six days' racing in August, as a result of which the recipient has apparently won £1,258 14s. 10d., all done on two races on the 12th. It does not need much calculation to see that, if only this can be taken as a fair specimen week, it is quite easy to have an income of £5,000 a month during the flat racing season. A great many people do in fact seem to be living like this. There are forty-eight telephone lines to this particular bookmaker, and the only thing that is disquieting is that at the very top of the notepaper there is printed : "To avoid mistakes when paying this account please return the heading." But on these figures there should never be any question of paying. It is a nice point where all the money goes that is won on the turf, but I recently met a grave and eminent professor of Medicine who is fond of sea voyages, and who went last Christmas on a three weeks' cruise to the west coast of Africa in company with some three hundred other passengers, most of them apparently successful at the races, and at the end of the three weeks the ship's bar boasted that its receipts amounted to £30,000.

#### THE WORLD OF CHESS.

Edward Tinsley, the Chess correspondent of *The Times*, who has lately died, was a splendid champion of the great game. He looked like a sea captain, and by a coincidence he shared a room in *The Times* office with the shipping correspondent, and a big panel on the door announced "Chess and Shipping." Tinsley had a breezy manner, a loud voice, and a deep laugh, and a large charity which the *maestri* of the Chess world, who are strange and formidable beings for the most part, often taxed to the full. He made every allowance for the temperament of great artists and he guarded their susceptibilities. I remember once writing an article based on the report from Buenos Aires that Capablanca had fallen asleep during the world's championship match. The truth was that he had merely closed his eyes to think better, and Tinsley brought Capablanca down to the office that I might apologise for attributing somnolence to so active a brain. Capablanca is remarkably free from vanity and has long wanted to change the rules of Chess and to have a board with a hundred squares, which would make an entirely new game because it would mean more pieces. He said he had no idea whether he would still find himself among the first half dozen exponents of the game, but he

would take a chance to help Chess to recover its youth. The openings are too well worked out to-day. When I used to go with Tinsley to watch the masters play, nothing surprised me more than the length of time they took over the very first moves, which one would have expected to have been cut and dried. But in fact the great masters take all sorts of things into consideration in a tournament, and in particular the form and state of mind of their opponent at the moment, and the second and third moves become of great importance as determining the style of game that is to result. The report that Capablanca had fallen asleep had a parallel a few years later in a tribute to Lord Haldane after his death by one of his brother Judges, who said he was anxious to clear up one particular misconception which arose because Haldane's powerful brain worked better when his eyes were closed, so that many people, looking at the judicial bench in the House of Lords or the Privy Council, were really in the presence of great cerebral activity when they thought they were beholding an endearing and traditional judicial weakness.

#### THE HOLY GAME.

I never knew that the extraordinary power of the Queen in Chess is the result of Spanish devotion to Our Lady. But so I read in a new magazine of Literary Plunder, called *Synopsis*. The Arabs, says this account, brought Chess from Persia to Morocco. There the King's chief support was called the Vizier, in Spain this became Farzia, and was gallicized into Vierge, and so the Queen.

#### WHEN IT WAS FINE.

I see the explanation now being offered for any Summer, which needs much forgiveness, is that Summers are getting wetter. In addition to all the other advantages which the last century had over ours must be added this of "sunny Summers." It seems very likely to be true, for it is hard to think how cricket could ever have secured the hold it has in English life if there had not been much more fine weather than we now expect. But when we remember Charles II's defence of the English climate, his saying that, after all, there was hardly ever a day on which you could not go out, we shall perhaps feel less confident that it was ever very different. One small point concerns the "merrie month of May"; it is well known how, through strong Protestant prejudice, the English would have nothing to do with the Gregorian reform of the calendar for two hundred years. They had particular reasons for disliking Pope Gregory XIII, and so they did not come into line till 1752. Then the calendar was turned on eleven days.

Schoolboys have since been taught to mock at people who shouted "Give us back our eleven days," but apparently creditors did benefit by the next Quarter Day coming abruptly so much nearer, without any compensation for those who had to pay, and it was quite a sensible outcry for anybody in debt, when debt was much more painful than the law has made it now. But it meant that the beginning of the "merrie month of May" used to come eleven days earlier, and before 1752 all the glad celebrations of "May morn" happened on our April 20th. How could May ever have won its position in literature on the strength of present performances?

#### INNOCENT III AS AN AUTHOR.

"When the face is externally painted, the inward parts are thereby corrupted and made noisome. All men and women are nothing else but vanity. For what is more vain than to trim and frizzle the hair, than to colour and paint checks and to stretch out the brows, seeing that the glory of this life is deceitful and that beauty is but vain." Thus far Pope Innocent III writing of the beauty parlours of the late twelfth century, in his grand book which was one of the most widely read and favourite works of the Middle Ages, generation after generation. It was printed in Queen Elizabeth's London, in English, twice in the 1570's, at the very time when men were being put to death on account of the Pope, and so it is not surprising if the name of the author did not appear in the English versions, when it was brought out in 1576 by a man called H. Kirton. He dedicated it to the Countess of Pembroke, saying it was a book written above "three hundred and three score years past," entitled *The Misery of Man*. He called his translation—and a very rare work it is—*The Mirror of Man's Life*, plainly describing "what weak mould we are made of, what miseries we are subject unto, how uncertain this life is and what shall be our end." The next year, George Gascoigne, the poet, feeling some remorse at the unspiritual character of most of his literary output, brought out a translation called more resoundingly *The Drum of Doom*. But he, too, kept quiet about the author. Most people are now brought up to think of Innocent III as King John's opponent, the man who put England under an interdict, and the leading exponent of the Papal overlordship. They would be surprised if they read this book of his, and I wish some publisher would reprint it. Among its many excellent tales is one which tailors could well use in their advertisements. It is the story of a certain philosopher who came in very mean apparel to a prince's gate and was kept waiting a long time, so he went home

and decked himself in gorgeous attire, when he was at once admitted, and when he came into the presence of the prince he began "to kiss and reverence his garment, whereat the prince, not a little marvelling, asked the cause why he did so, to whom the philosopher answered 'I do honour him that hath done me honour, for that which virtue could not obtain, my garment hath brought to pass. Oh, vanity of all vanities, that gorgeous garments should be more honoured than virtue and beauty, more esteemed than honesty.' " It is a slogan for Moss Brothers.

#### MORE FAME FOR LADY GODIVA.

I hear that that good woman, Lady Godiva, was the first person to say her prayers guided by stones on a string, the precursor of the rosary.

#### A.D. 1939—194—?

In *The Dolorous Passion* of Anne Catherine Emmerich, the Westphalian mystic who lived at the time of Napoleon, there occurs this passage from one of her Visions :—

"In the centre of Hell I saw a dark and horrible looking abyss, and into this Lucifer was cast after being first strongly secured with chains. God Himself had decreed this, and I was likewise told, if I remember rightly, that he will be unchained for a time, fifty or sixty years before the year of Christ 2000. The dates of many other events were pointed out to me which I do not now remember ; but a certain number of demons are to be let loose much earlier than Lucifer in order to tempt men, and to serve as instruments of the Divine vengeance."

#### HOTTER POLES.

They tell me that the North Pole is getting warmer, and I should say there was plenty of room for improvement, but it would prove a great source of trouble to the weather experts, in particular to the B.B.C., if they had not got a standing place from which to draw their bad weather. And as for Iceland, if things go on as the scientists say, it will have to change its name.

#### ASTROLOGERS AHoy !

Some years ago a Russian doctor began trying to popularize the sky as a spa, saying that rest cures could be spent in balloons. There are many attractions in a balloon, even if the balloon bore would obviously be harder to escape from than the ship's bore.



Now the sky has lost its commercial advantage as a safe retreat, and the Russians are taking a leading part in its annexation for men's fell purposes. Where the sky has gained most is in the rapid revival of belief in astrology. This very old calling can afford to laugh at the temporary and eccentric incredulity of certain upper strata of society in Western Europe in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. That is all the astrologers had to put up with, nothing very formidable, for people who keep such lofty company. Now they seem to be back in the saddle, or rather the pentagram; and no popular newspaper dare be without one.

#### THE QUEEN'S ASTROLOGER.

I suppose about the most successful astrologer in our history was Dr. Dee, although he was always complaining and in difficulties. But he was Queen Elizabeth's astrologer from the first moment of her reign, when he was asked to pick an auspicious day for the Coronation—a matter in which he gave satisfaction. When a wax figure of Elizabeth was found in Lincoln's Inn Fields, pierced through the breast with a pin, it was Dee who was sent for to cope with it, and he soothed the Queen by assuring her it was only a practical joke in admittedly execrable taste. The Queen and Cecil kept in touch with Dee, being both of them highly superstitious, but in the end his place of preferment was only a College Wardenship in Manchester, when he had particularly wanted the South of England.

#### IN THE SLIMMING AGE.

If you meet many sour looks in the near future do not take it personally. This advertisement has just appeared in *The Grocer*: "£500 a year guaranteed to salesman who can sell vinegar. Unlimited scope for the right man."

#### T FOR TORSO.

As there are always people anxious to christen their children with names which they have been seeing in the newspapers at the time, I cannot help wondering if we shall not be having "Torso" as a Christian name.

#### CASH AND CARRY DEPT.

A few years back the *Daily Express* published the results of its enquiries into how much Englishmen valued either this life or the next. It said its answers showed that £3,000 was the price for which

the ordinary man would sell his chances of immortality. This life rated higher and to agree to die within fifteen years the ordinary man would require £10,000. I wonder whether the same sort of results would be collected to-day.

I wonder, too, whether the decentralization now going on, the way businesses which had never imagined their offices could be anywhere except in the City of London, are settling down in small country towns, will not prove so much pleasanter that it will become permanent. The idea of special streets and quarters for special businesses was natural enough when there were no telephones and no rush hours. But now it has reached such lengths that the workers in London lose something like a tenth of their working lives, two hours a day, in the process of getting to and from offices in which they then write each other letters or talk to each other on the telephone.

#### A SOCK FOR SOCCER.

I heard, the other day, of a recent discussion among headmasters about that great problem, the schoolboy's Sunday, and how to map it out. Protestant schools find it particularly difficult. One headmaster said that he recognized it must be a day of rest from ordinary pre-occupation, and so he allowed Association football, but not Rugby, because Association is not really important.

#### BANDSTAND SECRETS.

From *The British Bandsman* comes news that all is not well in our British bandstands. "Red Rose" writes :

"I am told that in one big Lancashire town which uses a considerable number of bands in its parks, three bands which have been previously engaged will be passed over next season, not because of their playing, but for the reason that the behaviour of the men while on the bandstand was not of such a nature as to be considered gentlemanly. Bands, when fulfilling an engagement in a public park, should realize the fact that the audience have eyes as well as ears."

#### THE GREAT SNAG.

A friend tells me of a young man, a Catholic, about to make a mixed marriage, whose bride-to-be promised to consider very carefully the claims of the Church. She was not ordinarily a hinker, but she agreed to make an exception in this important matter. Time passed, and several times he asked her, and she said he was still considering. At last he asked her, and she said she

had reached a conclusion. She said "I am sorry, but I'm not going to turn. I don't like fish." Yet fish makes brain, as there is St. Thomas to show.

#### RECENT ADVANCES IN ZOOLOGY.

Roman circles, where they walk between the wolf of the Capitol and the Throne of the Fisherman, should hasten, in the interests of the Lateran Treaty, to answer an advertisement in the current *Exchange and Mart*, which runs: "Fishing gear, make fish bite like wolves. 2/6 a bottle, or a shilling box in paste. Youngs, Misterton, Somerset." In the same paper there is someone obviously settling down to a virtuous old age, and wanting to exchange "adult bucks, half Nubian kids," with all their suggestion of goatdom, the desert and a handy supply of scapegoats, and what is wanted in exchange is "a friendly old donkey." There should be many answers.

#### THE UNIVERSAL ALIBI.

*Le Canard Enchaîné* had a nice cartoon of an angry German woman asking her husband how he explains a letter signed "Your little blue rabbit," to which he makes reply, with a shrug of the shoulders, "What can I do about it? It is from King-Hall."

#### MINDING THE PAINT.

A number of travellers to Liverpool Street Station every morning have pointed out to the L.N.E.R. what a great difference it makes whether their train pulls in to a part of the station which is covered with a cheerful light green paint, or whether they go to a dreary, unpainted part. Their whole day, they say, is affected, and the paint manufacturers will be very pleased to hear it.

#### FUNCTIONAL ORCHESTRATION.

Those who think it is not just imagination, and that music really is becoming less and less of a solace, and more and more of a menace to mankind, will find some confirmation in the *British Bandsman*, where a band is advertising for three solo cornets, but is not really particular, for it goes on to say "or any other instrumentalist; work found for carpenters, lorry drivers and spray painter." It is only surprising that there is no vacancy for a pneumatic driller.

The other day I saw a nice advertisement in *The Times* for a tree companion. This was not in the spirit of the memorable little poem :

"A silly sort of person went and sat up in a tree,  
'What's good enough for birds,' he said, 'is good enough  
for me.'"

The tree companion sought in *The Times* was not meant to take any vow of stability, but to go from tree to tree, admiring.

There is an old riddle which says "What is it that wears white spats and hops from branch to branch?" to which the answer is "A bank manager." But they will not be eligible for this companionship, any more than the people who frequently crop up in *The Times* personal or agony column, and who specialize in family trees and the provision of the longest pedigrees at the shortest notice.

No trait was more endearing in the Emperor Maximilian than his extreme pleasure when the professional heralds, whom he put on to the job, came back to announce to him their great discovery, that he was descended from Noah. Another very endearing trait, reminiscent of Bottom's desire to have every part in Pyramus and Thisbe, was his idea of becoming Pope as well as Emperor, and thereby making everybody happy. In most medieval stories, people who, being magically in a position to wish effectively, wished to become Pope, were generally shown as having gone too far; the magic vanished and they did not even get a black pudding.

#### OVERHEARD.

Heard in a church the other day, this question by a woman A.R.P. Volunteer.

"Father, is it all right to go to Communion wearing a tin helmet?"

And this fragment :

"Were you in the last War?"

"Yes . . . and, good Lord, the noise . . . and the people."

#### HUMPTY DUMPTY'S POEM (A. HITLER, 1939-1941).

I sent a message to the fish,  
I told them, "This is what I wish."  
The little fishes of the sea,  
They sent an answer back to me.  
The little fishes' answer was,  
"We cannot do it, Sir, because——"  
I sent to them again to say,  
"It will be better to obey."

Lucio, who writes the *Manchester Guardian's* Miscellany, discusses the well-known fact that while private Members of Parliament are not allowed to do much except ask their three questions, each question they do ask costs the country thirty shillings, however foolish it is. The thirty shillings is mainly spent on the time and brains of His Majesty's Civil Service, who can find quite enough to do without needing to be set riddles. The original Nosey Parker was an Archbishop of Canterbury, but that invaluable public role is now filled by laymen as a rule.

Lucio discusses approved methods of making public speakers seek brevity, he quotes the Red Indian practice of only letting you speak for as long as you can stand on one leg, and, what was new to me, an old Siberian custom of making orators speak immersed to the neck in cold water. This move for more uncomfortable platforms and pulpits has many possibilities, but the slowest and longest preacher I know takes care never to mount his pulpit for fear of booby traps, and unfolds his mind from the altar steps.

#### THE GERMANIC UNION.

Robert L. Cru, the London correspondent of *Le Temps*, has been writing about our dear old Oxford Union: "There was something of a sensation, a few years ago, about a vote of the Oxford Union, a sort of little University Parliament, when the students voted with a large majority against a motion declaring that they would fight 'for King and Country.' Readers of *Le Temps* will no doubt remember it. I said at the time that this verdict should be taken with some reserve; it had been cleverly worked up by certain foreign agitators at the University; in the second place, the Oxford Union—as I know from experience, having seen there the crowded benches of Germans, in a debate at which I was a principal speaker, and, alas, defeated—is not at all representative of the general feeling of the University; and finally, I have never been able to get rid of the impression that the Oxford students voted against the formula 'for King and Country,' above all, because it is German (*für Gott, König, und Vaterland*)—so German that I saw it inscribed on the spiked helmets we captured in 1914, and that when the *Daily Mail* took it as a motto (although dropping the unimportant word *Gott*) during the General Strike of 1926, the English masses, and the Labour Party in general, were up in arms against this crypto-pro-Germanism, in vogue since the beginning of the Hanoverian dynasty."

The Australians are not primarily thought of as a liturgically minded people, but they are now alive to the symbolical importance of colour, and have abolished red tape because of its bad psychological effect on public servants, who will do much better, they think, with white tape. There will be fewer jokes, and less of a tradition to live down. It was an American who said of the American Senators: "They call themselves public servants, and we know they are servants by the length of time they take to do anything." But it can be no bad thing when everybody is complaining about the pace of modern life, that more and more people in every country are being absorbed into the country's service and learning to take their time. In Australia in particular there is an excellent tradition against hurry, a strong sense that the man is more important than the job. It is perhaps over exemplified in an instance which happened to me in Melbourne, where an Australian taxi-driver, due at seven, did not come at all, and when enquiries were made, replied that it had been a nasty morning and he had not felt like getting up. I have always felt that the judge who thought it a bull point against the Tichborne claimant that he let fourteen years pass in Australia without doing anything about his inheritance, failed to seize the atmosphere of Tasmania in the middle of the last century, which was full of people who could just not be bothered. In the very different atmosphere of the English courts, obsessed with property rights, and among lawyers saving up to buy themselves estates, such fecklessness seemed incredible, as incredible as forgetting the Latin learned at Stonyhurst.

#### OVER-NOSEY HISTORIANS.

A French friend tells me that the 150th anniversary of the Revolution has been overcast not merely by the move for national unity which Frenchmen always find depressing, although they know how to achieve it, but also by the way the great figures of the Revolution have been blown upon. Mirabeau, Danton, Fabre D'Eglantine, they all took foreign money, so it is difficult at this moment to cheer them very loudly. He said there was a general feeling that too much research had been done on the French Revolution and that it would have been better to have stayed content with some fine figures to look back on. He is an historian himself, and he could see unpopularity coming for the profession.

#### THE PROBLEM.

In literary history when the text books come to be written, this age of ours will have to be called the age of Problems. No word is more overworked to-day, for it can always be affixed to every

noun, you can either talk about the gate, or the problem of the gate ; the holiday, or the problem of the holiday ; the soul, or the problem of the soul. I spend my life striking it out of THE TABLET, and yet there are times when it has to be allowed in. Like so many of our stock words, including atheist, it comes from the Renaissance, but it was at first used, where it belonged, for mathematical and primary geometrical topics. I have been trying to find when it began to get the upper hand over the good old nineteenth century word "question," as in the "Irish question." It is almost as long, otherwise I should know at once that the sub-editors have made its fortune for it. As American sub-editors have got rid of "enquiry" and "investigation," and have promoted their twin favourites "prove" and "Quiz."

The coming of the double column heading has given sub-editors much more cream of choice, and the golden age for short words was the first quarter of this century. Now the popular papers are going in more and more for jig-saw display with many different types on the same page, and I shall not be surprised to see long words coming back, because of the patterns to which they will lend themselves. I am sure we shall see the decorative initial with a picture inside it, the initial which is the making of so many medieval manuscripts, turning up as the latest invention in typography in the popular papers. Sub-editors now try to tell the whole story in the headline, and news editors try to tell it in pictures, and so the illustrated initial should please everybody.

#### THE PROBLEM OF THE HEAD.

I did not know that the Irish Presbyterians were great jokers, but the *Irish Digest*, one of the best of this new form of handy jotted reading, quotes a rather pleasant note which the Irish Presbyterian says a doctor received from a patient :—

"Please call and see my husband. It's his head. He's had it off and on all yesterday, and to-day he's sitting with it in his hands between his knees."

#### A WAY WITH SHARKS, AND AWAY WITH SHARKS.

A missionary from Fiji, Father La Plante, has caused a good deal of stir by explaining how the Fijians go out after sharks, and get hold of them and give them kisses on the whites of their bellies, after which, for some strange hypnotic reason, the sharks are done for, and there is an end of them. The next time I hear of highly-placed dignitaries of the Church making themselves the guests of unpleasant rich business men, instead of merely being shocked I shall think about this story, and hope that in some gentle way there is quiet destruction afoot.

The Japanese know how to manufacture many things, and among them that useful article, a profound conviction of self-righteousness. This is how a statement of Japanese war aims begins :—

“If the sight of recent representative statesmen of the Powers of the world giving their utmost efforts in the battles of propaganda, diplomatic technique, armament expansion and economic rivalry, for making their respective nations the victor in confrontation conflicts, were ever reflected in the crystal mirror of Yama, Judge of Hades, they might appear to resemble the group of devils competing in display of their brutal force, using their long horns, hideous heads, shining eyes, sharp claws, iron bars and other things to their utmost.

“That may sound as an impolite criticism to those statesmen of the Powers, but as long as their policy toward others does not have as its foundation the cosmic philosophy that self and others are one and consequently there is seen absolutely no manifestation of creative power based on unselfish love, and after all the policy is for making their own nations the victor in confrontation conflicts, the criticism of the later day historian may not be much different from what we say to-day.”

#### FORWARD AND BACK.

An American priest, worried at the drift to the American cities, has launched a movement which in England we should call “Back to the Land.” But he has called it “Forward to the Land” from a knowledge of his countrymen, to whom it is no recommendation for anybody to be old and already familiar to mankind, and who think the less of agriculture for having been Adam’s occupation—and that of his brawling sons—in his later and less fortunate phase. But even the oldest of human activities can stir the imagination if it is presented as progress and the latest thing. Hence the slogan, and it is perhaps worth considering whether the same principle of appeal, or its opposite, is most effective in our own country. Everything that people are asked to do and are not, at the moment, doing, can be presented as progress, or, generally, but not invariably, as reform.

#### A.R.P.

A friend who took part in an A.R.P. drill told me of one man whose business it was to stand at a street corner with a card round his neck marked “bleeding severely.” He was not visited by the



ambulance people as soon as he hoped, for when they arrived at his corner they found he had vanished, leaving his card behind him, on which was written: "Bled to death. Gone home."

During a lull an Air-Raid Warden's wife was heard to remark: "I find I miss the bombs. They took my mind off the war."

DEAR ANGEL, EVER AT MY SIDE,  
HOW BORING I MUST BE.

I was sorry to hear of the death of Father Doran, parish priest of Abingdon. I once heard him preach a sermon on Guardian Angels which I shall never forget. He said we fail to show proper gratitude, or to recognize what it meant to an angel to be made the guardian of a human being. He said: "How would any of us like it, if the Lord suddenly beckoned to us and said 'You see that pig down there in that field, well, I want you to attach yourself to that pig and never leave it day or night, and look after and help it in every way you can.' " Yet our habits and ways of spending the time must be quite as boring and inferior to an angel as sty life and paddock-rooting would be to us.

BETTER STICK TO THE CLASSICS.

I feel very sorry not only for Lintchenko, but equally for Botchenko, ambitious scientists who thought they could make the lot of mankind happier by teaching sheep how to have more children. There would be more wool, more mutton, more lamb. Unfortunately their methods, inoculations in the best modern fashion, tried on ten thousand of the sheep of Dlic, Prope, Tro, Dok, killed a lot of them. That did not deter the scientists, who would not be where they are in human estimation if they had minded much about killing animals. It inspired them, and they would then experiment on 300,000 sheep of Kharkov. But before many of these sheep could die the scientists were hauled before the Soviet court, and they have been condemned for counter-revolutionary sabotage, and Trotskyism, and given twenty and ten years of forced labour. It is a good definition of a Trotskyist, a scientist whose experiments do not come off, except that if having your expectations falsified makes you a Trotskyist, both Marx and Lenin qualify.

COMING, SIR.

In the past we used to hear of old men coming to lay their bones in this or that favoured spot. Now they need worry no longer, for it will be made much easier for them. A portable mortuary

has taken the road, and it is being bought by a Pembroke Rural Council for £200, so that those Welshmen who feel like passing out can do so with a minimum of trouble. So fiercely do local authorities compete in the provision of the amenities which attract inhabitants. I commend Pembroke to the angry Frenchwoman of whom I heard the other day, who retorted to a priest who said he had no time for something or other: "Vous aurez assez de temps pour mourir un de ces jours, M. l'Abbé."

#### "CHRISTENED" IS THE WORD.

According to the International News Service, a child has just been christened at Managua, Nicaragua, with the names of Lucifer Satan Adam. I suppose his nationality was entered as Old Nickaraguan.

#### ONE LIBRARIAN ON ANOTHER.

Mgr. Galbiati, who after working for ten years under Mgr. Ratti at the Ambrosian in Milan, succeeded him as Prefect of that famous library, has published his reminiscences on the late Pope. Mgr. Ratti, who at first was appointed assistant to Mgr. Ceriani, entered his new functions bursting with ideas, and with the ardour of a young fully-trained specialist, endeavoured to convince his chief of the urgency of modern improvements. But to all his plans he got the benevolent but obstinate reply: "Let me die first. Let me die first: then you will do whatever you like, and I am sure it will be well done." "Not for one minute," observes Mgr. Galbiati, "did young Ratti trouble the hieratic peace, but in his heart every plan remained clear and definite, and after Mgr. Ceriani's death, though Mgr. Ratti never failed in the delicacy of his attentions towards the deceased Prefect, he resolutely set to work to carry out his ambitious schemes . . . I love to recall the distant days, never to return, when the shadows of night solemnly lengthened to protect, or perhaps mysteriously to awake, the vast accumulation of memories buried in the Ambrosian."

#### THE WEST OF ENGLAND.

Somerset is a county with a great reputation, if not since Joseph of Arimathea preferred it to the rest of England, at any rate since Alfred the Great; we are skipping King Arthur, who chose it as a retreat. Among its reputations was one for the special vigour and activity of its fleas, and the traveller Thomas Baskerville, who was there in 1683, after writing of them "the

stings of fleas were so sharp, as if so many needles had stuck in my flesh, this pain I did endure till towards day, when their bellies being full, there was a cessation," goes on to deduce the reason why, and to say, "sure it should seem ye sunne and aire from ye seikine seas do make fleas more venomous here than in other places." Sociologists have a rather unflattering description for the inhabitants of the Thames Valley. With them, "Thames Valley character" is a recognized description for a certain shiftless lassitude and lack of up-and-comingness. Among the great disproofs are St. Edmund of Abingdon, followed by William Laud, of Reading, but there has been rather a gap since Laud. Severn Valley character is not shiftless, and if the fleas really keep them on the hop like this, it explains not only their superior energy, but also, perhaps, that habit of rapid recourse to the rope and the knife which marks Shropshire lads.

Talking of fleas, I always like the riddle which was too much for Homer and which caused his death through vexation of not being able to solve it. The riddle was "What I could not find, that I kept; what I did find, that I threw away." The answer is, our little friends.

#### CONDUCTORS' FACES.

A great shopping rule, that the customer is always right, does not apply to passengers by train or bus. A little time back an American woman in Paris refused to pay her fare because she did not like the conductor's face; she did, however, pay the fine which the police imposed without commenting on their looks. It is silly to be critical of bus conductors who themselves have so much freedom of action in deciding whether or not to stop and pick up a gesticulating passenger. It is in the passenger's interest to keep the matter strictly in terms of impersonal status, and not of who has a nice face. Perhaps it should be added, to explain that Paris incident, that the conductor whose face was objected to was also a woman.

#### TREASURE.

The judgment of the court that the wonderful Anglo-Saxon finds of the seventh century at Sutton Hoo are not treasure trove, as they were not buried for concealment but as part of the funeral, is a great encouragement to all owners of land. Some years ago an individual with a divining rod turned up in the Spanish Main and quickly found a gold altar two feet high as well as a number of silver objects, for his rod was usefully interested in everything of value. There is plenty of treasure buried in the world if men knew

where to look. Before the French Revolution a great deal of valuable stuff was hidden away by the upper classes, and about 1880 the French Government of the day made an agreement with a professional diviner, a Madame Caillavah, to share any treasure her rod should disclose in St. Denis. She met, however, with no success, and the Government, as is the way of Governments, disowned her.

A year or two ago in Hampshire I heard of some people living in a bungalow and chicken-farming, who dug up great nuggets of gold which had been wrapped in sacking and buried, it was believed, at the time of the Civil War. I went to talk to them about it, and they said yes, they had found a lot and had told the police, who had carried it off to the British Museum, that there was nothing interesting, no fine cups or anything, just mere lumps of gold.

#### THE EMANCIPATION OF MANKIND.

What a happy time will come to the world with Circular 1473 of the Board of Education, which proposes to make Arithmetic optional. Nothing is more crabbing for the human style than the tyranny of numbers, and it must be thrown off if people are to enjoy their lives. But the rest of the circular seems very much in the spirit of that eminent educationist, Wackford Squeers, Senior. The lessons "are to be linked up with the environment of the school," as they were to such purpose at Dotheboys Hall.

#### MONEY TO BURN.

Not long since, our contemporary *America* had to take a firm stand against some of the advertising methods of the manufacturers of Beeswax Candles. Boasting, as they may, of the long time their candles take to burn, they went to the length of proclaiming "Two more Masses to the pound." and had to be sternly called to book for their irreverence. The Church remains in the modern world the great patron of the candle; but there are many shrines in which electric light is burnt, and where the devout may pay honour by inserting coins which turn on the light. Electricity is one of the greatest causes of the arrogance of modern men when they wonder whether their forefathers have anything to teach them. It is not necessary to have invented electricity, or even to know more about how to turn it off and on than is necessary to avoid sudden death, in order to enjoy this sense of superiority.

#### MUCH IN A NAME.

I am told that in Nyasaland young Africans pick themselves European names, and are very fond of publishers' catalogues as

sources. My informant told me of an occasion when various boys were asked their names ; one announced that his name was Harrap, another that his was Stanley Unwin, but a third declared his name was Oxford University Press.

#### COLOURED INCENSE ?

A new idea for Church liturgies is to be found in the Hungarian invention of cigarettes giving off different coloured smoke to match the dresses of the women smoking them. For too many centuries we have gone on thinking incense must always be the same colour whatever the feast, but modern science can increase the range of colours to fit the seasons.

#### EARLY STRUGGLES OF TADPOLES.

A wise Victorian hostess said : "I am always polite to young girls. You never know who they may not become." Perhaps in the same spirit the R.S.P.C.A. has been championing the tadpoles on Redhill Common, pointing out to the local authorities that the side of the pond is too steep for the tadpoles to climb. Tadpoles do not hold much of a place in the social hierarchy, but the R.S.P.C.A. has been associated with the animal creation long enough to know that tadpoles do not stay tadpoles. They rise in the social scale and become frogs, animals of immense heraldic and historical dignity, and the origins, so pundits have assured me, of the lilies of France. The Bourbon family, say these pundits, and I hope they are right, were originally priests from Egypt, and their badge was the frogs couchant. I asked when all this had happened, and they said "In Gallo-Roman times, when it was easy to come from Egypt." Both England and France had a lot of Egyptian emigration from 2000 B.C., and the Bourbons are to be considered as among the last stragglers from the Nile.

#### POKER IMPATIENCE.

Although Father Owen Francis Dudley's book is called *A Punch at Everybody*, there is in fact a good deal in it about living at peace, and there are in particular ten rules for a happy married life. Pondering these rules and committing them to memory, I have found myself with much perplexity over rule six, which reads : "The wife with a poker may be funny ; but don't try it on in real life. Although, tongues can be worse than pokers. The latter settles the matter. Tongues go on." It is the first time what may be called the irrevocable character of fancy poker work has been brought forward as an argument in favour of that drastic weapon.

A correspondent writes and tells me that something ought to be said against the twentieth century passion for pilgrimages *de luxe*. He tells me that at Walsingham a poster hangs, promising "perfect comfort and a breakfast car train," and he tells me that the French make no secret of their view that the English pilgrims will never do so well at Lourdes as those of nations whose pilgrimages are much less comfortable; but he will be a hardy travel agent who will advertise pilgrimages on foot, with the free provision of peas for the shoes. Lough Derg meanwhile remains for those who want a pilgrimage that really is a pilgrimage, with a great deal of fasting and hard praying on stony ground. After all, in the great centuries of pilgrimage, if pilgrims went in discomfort, so did every other kind of traveller. Indeed you were much better off if you could claim the privileges of a pilgrim, and there were cases in the Middle Ages of people who found they liked the life and remained in a permanent state of pilgrimage, with all the claims that status gave them to free board and lodging round the world.

#### ROAD INTO LANE.

I hear that Edgware Road has been petitioning the authorities to let the road be called Upper Park Lane. This, they say, would increase the value of all the property, and so of the rates, and would, in short, create wealth out of nothing. They only suggest that Upper Park Lane shall run to Praed Street. But why stop there, or at Kilburn or Cricklewood, or before the Great North Road? Park Lane will then be a wonder of the world, the really long lane that has no turning. The part where the millionaires used to live in the old days will then sink to being Lower Park Lane, which will perhaps be good for the souls of the residents.

#### THE PSYCHO-ANALYSIS OF COWS.

Catholics, who have long been prominent in emphasizing the special importance of the land in the life of a nation, have now acquired some fashionable and powerful allies in this matter. This is an age in which psychology is held in honour, and among psychologists those are honoured the most who deal not with anything so humdrum and familiar as consciousness, but with the murky depths which can be attributed without contradiction to the unconscious. Farmers to-day need to be not merely psychologists, but psycho-analysts, and nothing will raise them more in popular esteem. At the London Individual Psychological Summer School, revelations have been made about a cow on a Buckingham farm which developed an inferiority complex and failed to live

up to her promise as a milker. She was treated psychologically, and the results in milk and fame have been stupendous. It is, of course, not a new thing, the realization that animals, like human beings, have to be encouraged, petted, and above all, made to feel important if they are to do their best work. The cavalry, when there were cavalry, used to have an order "Make much of your horses," and those who have had to do with mules, particularly with military mules, say that vanity is the mainspring of the mulish character, and that mulish sulkiness is always wounded pride. Now the cavalry is being increasingly mechanized there will be less play for psychology, but there is a school of thought which holds that motors, too, need to be coaxed and flattered, and will respond to a sympathetic personality, and confine themselves to indignant and futile splutters in the hands of those who do not admire them enough.

#### THE BULLS ARE WINNING.

If anything were needed to restore the self-esteem of the Buckinghamshire cow, it might be the news from Spain, where the bulls are winning the bull fights, because the toreadors' hands have lost their cunning during the years of the war. It may also be that there is an ideological objection now to using red rags at these great national pastimes.

#### NEWS FROM TARTARY.

The Chinese presentation of "The Merry Widow" was given under the title "He dead—she glad."

And, from the *Daily Telegraph*:

"The Pope was joined by the British destroyer Scout from Hong Kong, and both steamed up-river into the harbour."

#### ON BEING POSSIBLY IMMORTAL.

Mr. Joad has been writing in the *Daily Herald*, trying to defend the essential decencies, and making a typically modern plea for individualism, saying of man that "he has a soul, possibly immortal, existing primarily in and for himself, and not for the sake of anything other than himself" (a howler). He goes on: "I do not know how to prove this, but to deny it is to blaspheme against the dignity of man and degrade him to the level of a slave." But it would be very interesting to see the immortality of the soul becoming tentatively fashionable in the quarters which used to attack it, because they did not wish any consideration introduced which might interfere with a life of pleasure, here and now.

Soon, Mr. Joad will realize the weakness of writing "existing primarily in and for himself," and then we may get some overtures in a theological direction. He has been writing, too, about Christianity in the *New Statesman*, and elicited a most pathetic letter from an Anglican clergyman, sometimes from which particularly pleased me. They ran: "Two small points. Not every church is empty or only peopled by the aged. St. Mary's, Oxford, when under Canon Barry, dispelled such a statement." This is indeed the very soft answer, to quote the University church at Oxford, some years ago. It is high time the aged were a little more truculent. They are soon going to be the great majority of the population, and by all the quantitative fashions of the day, numerical majority will mean they are always right.

#### WHAT THEY DID WITH THEIR TIME.

There is a book I read many years ago, but I do not know its title or its author, and for fifteen years I have, perhaps not surprisingly, been seeking it in vain, although I believe there is a copy in the library at Sheffield University. It is a book whose thesis is that all the works we call the classics were in fact written by monks in the dark and middle ages, in order to provide a background for Holy Scripture. The author said, which is true, that all our MSS. date from these monkish times, and he argued that we accept the works as genuine because they corroborate each other, but, said he, that is the very way the monks set out to deceive us, and he envisaged them sitting about in different parts of the cloister, one writing Suetonius and another Juvenal, and chuckling.

#### MORE PUZZLED PORTERS.

Those lively sparks, the Directors of the Great Western Railway, have thought of a new way of competing against the excitement of the roads. Railway men, whenever they open the newspaper, read wonderful stories of accidents with motor cars, and they think railway life an altogether too humdrum affair. But things are being made up to them, and some 22,000 jigsaw puzzles have now been handed out by the railway company. It is true that they are very moral jigsaws, with a lesson, and the lesson is the rather depressing one to "Handle with Care" and "This Side Up." When the pieces, being all "This Side Up" are put together, it shows children weeping over a damaged packing case, not cursing the railway, like robust young cubs, but in the state of tears and annoyance designed to touch the soft hearts of railwaymen. The puzzle technique is obviously a good one. It has played its part before now in the Sunday schools, and inarticulate priests, or those who do not know enough words to make the



sermon last a self-respecting time, have puzzles handed round and collected again with the plate.

#### CHRISTINA FOYLE AND HITLER.

I read in the *Jewish Chronicle* how that enterprising Christina Foyle, the great Book Club Foundress, wrote to Hitler when she heard that books by Jews were to be destroyed, and asked if she could buy them cheaply as most of the best German books, she thought, were by Jews. Hitler replied personally, saying he would not sell the books because they would be bad for the English public. If this is a true tale, Messrs. Foyle have a valuable autograph. I was in their shop once when a young schoolboy, full of hope, came in to sell not merely first editions of H. G. Wells' pamphlet against Hilaire Belloc and Belloc's counterblast, but also, said he proudly, "two autograph envelopes." He had written to both authors. He was not going to sell the letters he had received, but Foyles could make him an offer for the envelopes. To this, however, they did not seem to be rising very high. The best thing I have seen lately in the way of autograph and memento-hunting was the story by the wife of the Chief Justice Hughes, of U.S.A., who was written to by a collector of the autographed shirt tails of famous men in which they had attended various banquets.

#### NOTHING LIKE LEATHER.

From a notice in a boot and shoe shop—"Monks are Mannish." Monks, it seems, are a good kind of shoe, so named for their strong soles and for not minding being downtrodden.

#### "PROPAGANDA DE FIDE."

A pleasant paper is *Consolation*—a Journal of Consolation and Courage. In its issue of April 8th, 1938, it says:—

"Seemingly just to keep his name in the papers, the Pope has manufactured another Spanish Saint, one Salvador da Orta, and then he said he hoped the new saint would help to bring about peace in Spain. Can you think of anything more supremely silly? Da Orta is not even mentioned in the *Encyclopaedia Americana*, constant use of which discloses more and more that it is under Roman Catholic influence or control."

#### IT ALSO SATS.

"At Leaksville, North Carolina, the 'Reverend' Erskine X. Heatherley, pastor of the King Memorial Baptist Church, like a Jesuit in disguise, fired twenty-six members out of the Church because they went swimming in pools frequented by both men and women, and otherwise used their reason and common sense.

Thirteen other 'prisoners' quit when the twenty-six were fired; one woman fainted and had to be carried home; men and women wept. A swell spiritual feast! Religion more foolish than ever."

#### ST. FRANCIS DE SALES.

These remarks about St. Francis de Sales have a flavour all their own:—

"And yet when we reckon up his faults of character and conduct, there remains so much of good in him that we must blow away the chaff and retain the grain. He possessed a burning love of God, a fervent zeal for souls, entire self-sacrifice, devotion to what he believed to be his duty, sweetness of disposition, and great insight into the spiritual needs of the soul. Jacob was a shifty, mean creature—but he had spiritual might and he, not Esau, saw angels. Esau was the finer man of the two brothers, but sold his birthright for a mess of pottage."

(Then we come on to the comparison with Chas. Kingsley!)

"You could hardly find two men more unlike than Francis of Sales and Charles Kingsley. There can be no question which was the manlier, more straightforward and honourable—but what woman in distress of mind would have gone to Charles Kingsley for comfort and guidance? Kingsley's presence in the hunting field doubtless sweetened it, but he would have been out of his element altogether in the Confessional. Every man has his special gift and his special work given him by God to perform."

Extract from the Preface to *St. Francis de Sales* ("Library of the Soul" Collection, published by Chas. Whittingham, Chiswick Press), edited by Rev. S. Baring Gould.

#### VERIFY YOUR REFERENCES.

There is a church near my home, early nineteenth-century Gothic, and every time I pass it, which is several times every week, I murmur the pious ejaculation of the place, "Verify Your References." For the church was built by the sister of the man who coined that memorable and irritating phrase, the great Dr. Routh of Magdalen, the last man in England to wear a wig, and Dr. Routh designed this church for her. This week I have been thinking of the phrase again after returning for a brief and happy evening to the world of academic debating, over which the late Lord Birkenhead used, in an avuncular way, to tell me not to waste too much time. The occasion this week was the Eights Week debate at Oxford, the subject the so-called "Decline of Frivolity," with Ronald Knox, whose special home ground this Eights Week debate is, pointing out all manner of hitherto

unsuspected, but pretty doubtful truths. Here was debating in the best English patrician style, with nobody giving references for anything, and what a contrast, I thought to myself, to those trans-Atlantic debaters, who arrive on the platform with a card index and select from it the appropriate card, giving all the references in confutation, or as they say, rebuttal, of what they have just heard. The next development will be merely to announce the references from the platform, leaving those among the audience who care to go and look up the facts in the library and see if it is not just as the speaker said.

#### THE PRAISE OF DIRT.

One of the great unsolved riddles of humanity is the origin of the phrase "How's your poor feet?" Some say it came from the endless tramping through the Crystal Palace when the Great Exhibition was first opened, but others reply that it is much older than that. Of the truth expressed, that feet deserve pity, there can be no question, as is easily shown by a look at the *Universe* for February 7th, where there was a long poem by an American Jesuit, in praise of dirty hands. The poem is indeed called "Dirty Hands," and I do not suppose our contemporary would have welcomed it half as warmly if it had been called "Dirty Feet"; yet the dignity of manual toil and hard and lowly service is equally to be pleaded for the feet that trudge and support as for the hands, and why should a man sing about calloused hands rather than bunioned feet? The same page has a large advertisement for what we have been taught to call inner cleanliness, but there should be one of those "say it in pictures" advertisements, showing how a Catholic working man with a dirty job, nevertheless keeps so well washed that in the last picture he is shown banding round the plate in church.

That poem was a part of the great reaction against white-collar jobs, which has a good deal to say for itself. Mechanics are in general able to earn more than clerks, and as political power follows economic, this is their day and the garage epoch. The enemies of the Jesuits will hail this poem as characteristic of the Society's opportunism. No priests sat in more drawing rooms, drinking out of fine china, in the drawing room age, and now drawing-room hands are derided by this S.J.

#### THE THEOCRATIC TOUCH.

"I thought of the Archbishop of Canterbury, and the stern way he dealt with Wally Simpson, and I wondered why he had

compromised with the pagan Jew baiter, Hitler, so long. Now I thought: If the old Archbishop had grabbed a sword or a mitre, long before Munich, and yelled to the Protestant clergy of all the world, 'For God's sake boys, come on,' and they had marched on Munich the way Hitler had marched into the Ruhr, or Mussolini on Rome, well, the whole thing might not have happened."

From Clare Boothe, *Europe in the Spring*.

#### SERMONS AS CURTAIN RAISERS.

I found in Scotland what an immense success the Poles have had in gaining the affection of the Scots. This is a good thing for the Church, because they take a great part in many parishes, singing at Mass with a sad beauty. At Dunblane I heard something new to me, for the priest preached his sermon before reading the Epistle and Gospel, and it was very effective in creating expectancy. What seemed to me so clever was that he avoided any of the anti-climax which we often feel on passing from St. Paul and the Evangelists to a discursive modern commentary. Instead, we had an introduction, and ended on the high notes.

Dunblane has, however, no resident priest, and, what always seems so wrong in a Catholic Church, there is no Reservation and an empty tabernacle. There must be all too few priests in the Lowlands, where what in the south would be considered a well-filled church, is only served from a distance.

#### TURNING TOMBSTONES TO ACCOUNT.

Some years ago there was, in Aberdeen, an enterprising hatter called Samuel Martin, who proclaimed himself "Practical Flatter and Hatter to the People," the distinction between the two activities not being very clear. He carried advertisement to a pitch which has not been surpassed in the new age of publicity. One thing he did was to erect a large monument to himself in the Nellfield cemetery, with the inscription "The last resting place of Samuel Martin, Hatter to the People."

The shops of old Aberdeen could deal pretty severely with unsatisfactory people who came in to buy and did not buy. One firm used to keep a pile of goods held in position by a small piece of wood and a cord, and placed so that the whole of fell on the head of anyone leaving the shop who had given trouble and not made a purchase. The goods were not heavy enough to do injury, and shop-walkers at once came forward with lavish apologies, but the shop had the inward satisfaction of revenge.

In the North I read many strange things, but none more remarkable than the sort of prescriptions which Scotland, so pre-eminent in nineteenth century medicine, was prescribing in the eighteenth. The nicest one was a remedy for a whitlow on the finger. All you had to do was to hold the finger inside the ear of a cat. Animals, indeed, were extensively used in all these prescriptions, and the concoctions of the witches in Macbeth seem to have been mixtures which would have surprised no Scottish apothecary. One of the reasons for keeping a lot of animals about the place, even when food was scarce, was that you never knew when you were going to need parts of their insides. Dogs in particular were freely used, and without there being any outcry.

#### THE CLERGY.

So often do I hear of nervous breakdowns of one kind or another among the clergy that I cannot help feeling that here is the chance which H. C. Lea missed. He wrote his big volumes about auricular confession, indulgences, celibacy, the Inquisition, but there would have been an opening for another two or four volumes on clerical ill-health through the ages. There are not enough statisticians in the Church to work out the number of days of pastoral care that are lost through illness or worry. But it must be a most alarming total.

#### OLD NICK.

History, they say, is philosophy teaching by examples, and biography is the best kind of history, teaching by personal examples. So I have been reading an important biography, the life of the devil, and learning a great deal from it. My old author teaches me what I never knew, that the devil is, perhaps inevitably, a good deal of a copy cat, and that seeing the firmament he went away and made comets, which are highly unreliable and all over the place. My author maintains that compacts with the devil are much commoner than polite society admits; indeed, he is of opinion that it is the most likely explanation of any demonstration of unexpected abilities by our friends and acquaintances, and that instead of notes of congratulations, we should say with sharp and sinister glances, "What awful price have you paid for this success?"

The first part begins in a way reminiscent of Public Assistance Boards, "State of the devil's circumstances after his expulsion"; he has had altogether too much public assistance and private help. The book has written in the flyleaf: "Wm. Philips's devilish book, 1800."

There is a West End clubman—to borrow poster language—who these many years has been inviting himself to dinner and accepting, even at very short notice, the invitations. I am told he is a familiar figure in two famous clubs, through whose porters he sends telegrams, telling himself to expect himself, or alternatively, that his company is eagerly awaited. He explains that he likes himself far better than anyone else he has ever met, so it is natural he should see as much of himself as he can.

#### WITHIN THE INCOME.

As we draw near to March 31st and to April 5th, and the great financial dates, there will be many to echo the dictum of Vauvenargues that “the supreme effort of the human spirit is to be equal to one’s fortune, or live at the level of one’s means.” The English, I am told by those who profess to know the incomes of mankind, are only excelled by the American in the habit of living beyond their incomes; on the Continent it is only done in the best circles. I remember hearing of a young man whose parents-in-law, just after he got married, were complaining that he had already signed hire-purchase agreements for weekly payments adding up to considerably more than he was earning. His answer was that he would be earning more and more, while the payments would gradually come to an end, so all would be well. His father-in-law said “I am quite expecting to have to provide a home for my daughter, and I am prepared to put you up at the same time, but let it be understood that you are not to bring all those things you have signed for with you; I won’t have them fetched away from my house by the companies.”

#### THE ENGLISH BIBLE.

A Professor of Scripture in the Middle West, commenting on the text “You cannot serve God and Mammon,” said this was obviously a misreading of the original, which must have read ‘You cannot sever God and Mammon,’ for nor you can, said he, and all worship like all other human activities, needs a material foundation. There is no altar without stone and building. In short, he said, business is necessary to life, and should not be knocked like this in a book so widely read as the Bible. Then they asked him had the Bible been written originally in English for this mistake to have crept in? He said he did not know or greatly care what language the original mistake might have been made in. The important thing was that it had been put right in English.

It seems that much of our trouble in taking down all our signposts, and in blotting out the names of our stations so that we none of us can say where we have been, was really unnecessary, because the young Germans are becoming increasingly unable to spell. The *Hamburger Tageblatt* has been expressing its alarm at the way the standard is going down, and quotes the results of a recent examination for apprentices. There were 120 candidates, and eighty-one misspelt Goethe's name in seventeen different wrong ways, ninety-four wrote nouns without capitals, and seventy-eight wrote adjectives with capitals. But the Germans cannot have it both ways. "Whenever I hear the word culture," said Goering, "I undo the safety catch on my revolver."

#### ON SCIENTISTS.

"One would expect it of these Physiologists and searchers of Modes and Substances that being so exalted in their Understandings, and enriched with Science above other men, they should be as much above 'em in their Passions and Sentiments. The consciousness of being admitted into the secret Recesses of nature and the inward Resources of the human heart should, we would think, create in these gentlemen a sort of magnanimity which might distinguish 'em from the ordinary race of Mortals. But if their pretended Knowledge of the Machine of this World and of their own Frame is able to produce nothing beneficial either to the one or to the other, I know not to what purpose such a Philosophy can serve except only to shut the door against better knowledge and introduce Impertinence and Conceit with the best countenance of authority."

Shaftesbury, *Characteristics*, Vol. 1. p. 301, ed. 1711.

#### "SWORD OF THE SPIRIT."

Lest London should be feeling puffed up these days, there is this little passage from that storehouse of such pithy saws and examples, Burton's *Anatomy of Melancholy*. "I may say that which St. Benedict once saw in a vision, one devil in the market place, but ten in a monastery, because there was more work; in populous cities they would swear and forswear, lie, falsify, deceive fast enough of themselves; one devil could circumvent a thousand; but in their religious houses a thousand devils could scarce tempt one silly monk. All the principal devils" (Burton goes on), "I think, busy themselves in subverting Christians; Jews, Gentiles, and Mahommedans are extra calm, out of the fold, and need no such attendance, they make no resistance, they are his own

already ; but Christians have that shield of faith, sword of the spirit to resist, and must have a great deal of battery before they can be overcome."

He gives a grim account of religious melancholy, "to their thinking they are already damned, they suffer the pains of hell, and more than can possibly be expressed, they smell brimstone, talk familiarly with devils, hear and see chimæras, prodigious uncouth shapes, bears, antics, black dogs, fiends, hideous outcries, fearful noises, shrieks, lamentable complaints"; and after administering good spiritual counsel, he proceeds to various other remedies, and in particular to the value of herbs and precious stones against devils and their trying ways. He tells us how Anthony Musa, physician to the Emperor Augustus, strongly approved of betony as a holy herb, good against fearful visions ; and that the ancients planted it in churchyards, as men also planted mint and rue and pennyroyal and angelica. Sapphires and carbuncles he recommended among stones. The theory was that devils worked their confusions and distress of mind through mixing the humours of the human body, and mixed humours needed mixed remedies. Hence, I suppose, the extreme complexity of most witch's prescriptions. Other remedies for the spiritual willies he gives ; accurate music and fires in bedrooms.

#### A POSSIBLE PATRON.

A correspondent points out the claims of St. John of God to be the patron saint of Auxiliary Firemen, because of his prowess when the great hospital at Granada burnt, and he went in and out, rescuing patients, being quite unscathed and unscorched, as is the way of the Saints. But my correspondent very frankly points out two snags against him, that when he was born—in 1495—a bright light was seen over his house, which Wardens would disapprove of, and that, at the same time, all the Church bells rang of their own accord, which would upset the Home Guard.

#### ONLY THE FAIR ARE REALLY BRAVE.

I heard the other day of a man in the East End who displayed great intrepidity and indifference of danger, and after a time this was noticed, and he was commended. "No," he said, "I do not want to get a false reputation for courage. The truth is that my nose is too long. I know this, and I know there is nothing to be done about it, but it ruins everything for me, and I am quite indifferent whether I go on living or not."



There has just been caught off the coast of South Africa a fine blue fish which was believed to have died out 50,000 years ago. It offered no explanation about where it had been, and like all prodigals, is getting a great deal of excited attention of a kind not extended to the ever-present Cod.

#### A JAR IN GERMANY.

In the matter of relics the Church may be taken as having little to learn, although Catholics of earlier generations had a better run for their money than we have. We are not shown the doors of Santa Sophia with any confidence that they are of the wood of Noah's Ark, and the modern, very sophisticated and irreligious Turkish guides would be the last people to tell such stories. When John de Witt came travelling to England as a young man he noted in his diary a visit to Canterbury Cathedral, where he saw some of the earth from which Adam was made, part of Joseph's coat of many colours, and many other rarities. But the best relic I know of is in a church in Mecklenburg; it is a jar containing some of the original darkness which Moses spread over the Egyptians.

#### STREET BEGGARS.

Algernon Cecil's article last week on beggars drew a comment which struck me, from a friend who said, "What a very unfair line to take, that beggars must tell the truth in the streets when mass posters and advertising men are dressing up the truth without half the beggars' excuse."

#### THE SLEEPING ELEPHANT.

The Swiss, I see, are to band themselves together in an association of all the people who get no direct subventions from the State. A Mr. Bolliger, of Zurich, has written a book called *The Sleeping Elephant*, which is the symbol of private enterprise being preyed upon by the State. He complains that now the first idea in any difficulty is not to say "Heaven helps those who help themselves," but to demand that the State does something for you, and that Switzerland is becoming a country of parasites. If so, it is a just punishment for making so much fuss of the cuckoo and promoting him to the status of a clock.

#### THE ORDER OF MERIT.

Gilbert Murray and Herbert Fisher were the two prize fellows elected by New College in 1888, and over half a century later one of the friends succeeds the other in the Order of Merit, an

order not imagined when they were young but one which has taken, in its thirty years of life, the place it was intended it should. The two young Dons became the outstanding representatives of the new, pointedly secular Oxford for which Newman's successful clerical adversaries prepared the way. In John Morley's *Recollections*, you can read an extract from an early diary in which he records Gilbert Murray bringing Fisher to him in the country, and he made the note, "Fisher quite an acquisition." In the chapters of posthumous *Autobiography* by H. A. L. Fisher, just published by the Oxford University Press, that meeting is described from the young acquisition's point of view, and he tells us how Morley said at the end, "I am going to send you away with a text," and finding a much used copy of Bain's *Life of Mill*, he read out to them Mill's recipe for a happy life, not to seek from life more than life is capable of giving, and that the happy life is three parts practical. It was advice which matured in the lives of both those young scholars.

Gilbert Murray's have been very controversial, as controversial as J. L. Garvin's, and it is a tribute to the spirit of our public life that both men appear in the same New Year's Honours, each with the congratulations of innumerable opponents. Both began life from Catholic homes, with Irish Catholic blood and background, and in the late Victorian atmosphere lost belief, when it was very easily lost by educated youth; but both have seen among their children a recovery of the faith.

Among so many other claims to distinction, Gilbert Murray was the first person to ride an old penny farthing boneshaker down Church Street, Kensington, and he possesses a rare gift of thought reading of which I have had personal experience and can vouch for. He goes out of the room and one of the remaining company says what he is going to think about. Then Gilbert Murray comes in, takes the wrist or hand of the thinker and begins to describe what is being thought about, becoming more and more precise. It fluctuates a little with the people, and I remember white oxen in the streets of Moscow were given as white horses, but in the main the results were extraordinarily faithful, even lines of poetry being given correctly.

#### JOHN MORLEY.

Time has blown a good deal on John Morley's repute. His books on the eighteenth century freethinkers have gradually been discovered to be such special pleading as to classify as polemical pamphlets, while successive disclosures by contemporaries have

left posterity in no doubt about his small and humourless vanity. Yet there must have been some very real quality in him that men so different as Gladstone and Chamberlain and Acton appreciated him so highly, and that F. W. Hirst has remained devoted to his memory. When I was a youth, I used to swallow everything he wrote, and put him on a pedestal; it is only when a man has come to appreciate Pascal and Newman that he sees the Liberals clearly, and acquires a nose for that Liberal pride which stinks to heaven so much more than the sin publicans go in for, and that he comes to see how all the virtue in Liberalism is lost when it ceases to live in, and work upon, an authoritarian structure, and is elevated into being itself the guiding principle. What the secular Liberal movement has made of Oxford in half a century is faithfully portrayed in the final chapter of *Let Dons Delight*.

When Morley asked Lady Galway about Diderot, whose praises he had sung, she said with excellent wit that she pronounced him differently, as "D. D. Rot."

#### ECCLESIASTICAL LADDERS.

Was it some echo in his head of the poet who wrote of the "Stairs that slope through darkness up to God" that has been troubling the *Bystander*? It has printed a picture of Monsignor Knox, complete with mantelpiece, with a brief biography which said that Ronald Knox, after being received in 1917, "made as rapid progress in his new faith as in his old." No, what was being measured was not Father Faber's "Growth in holiness," taking the stairs two at a time, but merely in ecclesiastical rank, for the notice went on to explain that within a decade and a half he was again a priest at Oxford. The writer of that "again" seems to take rather a snakes and ladders view, and those ten and a half years were spent in getting back to the square from which the drop occurred. The picture shows him sitting on his Oxford fender, like a good chaplain, keeping his charges away from the fire. But no one has worked out exactly the parallel ranks of the Catholic and Anglican clergy. Where does the grander sort of Monsignor come, translated into terms of Archdeacons or Deans?

#### WHERE'S GEORGE.

A letter from a correspondent this week suggests, rather forcibly, that it was "When George in pudding time came o'er" that George as a Christian name began its vogue at almost the top of the popularity lists. There are a few notable Georges, like George Herbert, and George Monk, before the Hanoverians,

but nothing like the spate we have seen since. It would be interesting to see whether Albert will hold its own and be continued on its merits as a Christian name. I suppose most Englishmen if stopped in the street and questioned would guess that Albertus Magnus was the Prince Consort.

### WHAT DO YOU CALL RICH ?

On nothing do people take a more relative view than on the meaning of the word "rich." I knew a woman with a house off Berkeley Square, where a staff of eight helped herself and her daughter to live. Every summer the whole caravan trekked to a house by the sea, the motors loaded with all manner of bare essentials. "I am so thankful," that lady used to say, "that I do not want any of the things rich people have." At another level, the Roman Crassus used to say that "no man was to be considered rich who could not maintain an army out of his income" (income and not capital). And, growing humbler again, there was an English nobleman of the last century who was known as "King Jog" from his remark that "a man could jog along on seventy thousand a year," and I believe it was Lord Crewe's father who said that "to feel comfortable, a gentleman should always keep £18,000 on current account." A great change came over the world with the development, in the last two centuries, of paper wealth. Of old, what you had appeared to all the world, your acres and castles and herds, and it became much harder to resist public opinion, with its insistent call to you to be reasonably open-handed if not profuse. A great many people got their eggs under every rich man's table. But with the development of commerce and finance, came the man who, living in a small house in a town, was the real owner of vast properties at great distances away, who could sit and save without anybody but his solicitor having an idea of his closeness. The support of public opinion always makes virtue easier, and so I judge the convention of extreme reticence about incomes as detrimental to the salvation of the rich. In America, off and on, they publish everybody's declared income, and on the whole, as taxes have been tight, people would rather bear the penalties of being marked down as affluent than the alternative disabilities of being thought poor, and, if poor, then either unsuccessful or eccentric.

### HEALTH AND HOLINESS AGAIN.

A teacher in Scotland wrote to tell me how she had been giving the children their Bible lesson, just after they had had a hygiene

lesson, which was about Daniel in the Lion's Den. After she had told the story and had, as she thought, explained everything very thoroughly, she asked "Why did the Lord shut the lion's mouth?" She was rather amazed to get this reply instantly, "To teach the lion to breathe through its nose."

#### AND STILL TALKING OF BREATHING.

St. Denis, they said, and it is well known, carried his head in his hands after his martyrdom, until he came to the Seine. Then, needing both hands to swim with, he put his head in his mouth, and so came safely across. "He could not have done it" exclaimed the Irishman after a moment of wonder, "for it would have choked him. He could not have breathed with it in his mouth."

#### PUBLISHERS, AWAKE.

Publishers will need to watch the tendency to which Dr. Downey referred when he opened Bradford's Catholic Press and Book Exhibition, for schoolboys to be allowed to choose what they will have for prizes. Dr. Downey, said that sometimes when he is asked to give away the prizes he finds it is a matter of handing out roller skates and wrist watches. It used to be assumed that a school prize had to be a book, and a fairly unreadable book at that. I remember being deeply shocked on going to the Oratory school prize giving, some years ago, to see that the prizes were largely works of Agatha Christie and other writers of the day, for the essence of a prize is to become an heirloom, the binding matters more than the contents, but the contents should be of the kind of which it said that no gentleman's library is complete without them. School prizes are one of the godsend of the publisher's life, and they are a preserve to be jealously guarded. It is not merely that they are a way of disposing of surplus stocks, but that they emphasize early in life the dignity of letters, and they have even been known to have started a taste for reading.

#### IT IS DIFFICULT TO PRAISE GRACEFULLY.

A man said of the Archbishop of Liverpool "He is an old hand at public dinners. It's not surprising he speaks so well." I suppose "hand" is right here, though it suggests no more than knife and fork proficiency. It does not sound right to call a man, especially when he is an Archbishop, "an old tongue," or "an old mouth."

On Health Sunday, the London Vegetarian Society staked out their claim and wrote round urging religious teachers to remember vegetarian diet, saying : "Without doubt, every hearer must be vegetarian if he had to kill his own food." This, however, is a contentious statement. We may suppose that St. John the Baptist killed his own locusts.

#### WEALTH AND HOLINESS.

When I read the other day in Eric Gill's Autobiography how he thought a Catholic stockbroker or bank clerk virtually a contradiction in terms, I wondered how it is that so many Catholics forget that our religion began in the cities of a business civilization. I wish we had some details about St. Joseph of Arimathea's wealth, and how he acquired and kept it; it is certain that the early Church was full of people whose activities would have disqualified the standards of the Catholic Pastoral school. Catholicism is not an essentially agricultural religion—the pagani were the last people to get hold of it—and in the industrial countries of to-day it has to humanize and sanctify industrial life, as it did military and agricultural life in the feudal era.

In the last century the land was everywhere sacrificed to quick returns and the money economy, just as human life was sacrificed. We are waking up to the huge mistakes of policy, but we have got to be the model industrial country, not an agricultural people like the Irish or the Hungarians, who can hold industrialism in horror if they have the fancy. We owe our freedom to-day to our heavy industry.

#### BABU CATHOLICISM.

When I read violent Catholic utterances, I sometimes think of Indian Congress politicians, and how nothing makes for sweeping statements like the knowledge that you have no responsibility, and I often think, too, of some sentences at the beginning of Cardinal Newman's letter to the Duke of Norfolk : "There are those among us, it must be confessed, who for years past have conducted themselves as if no responsibility attached to wild words and overbearing deeds ; who have stated truths in the most paradoxical form and stretched principles until they were close upon snapping."

#### A WARNING TO ATHEISTS.

When Maurice Baring was in Russia, an atheist went to a Russian village to convert the peasants to atheism. He spoke to a gathering of peasants, and taking a sacred ikon in his hands, he said, "I will spit on this ikon ; you will see whether fire comes

down from heaven to kill me or not." He then spat on the ikon and said to the peasants "You see, God hasn't killed me." "No," said the peasants, "but we will," and they did.

#### HOW IT STRIKES THEM.

One of the best comments on the Lease and Lend Bill came from the Italian Radio, which said that really an Empire which needed to be helped by another country must be considered as very near dissolution.

#### DR. LEY'S CURIOUS CESSPOOLS.

Dr. Ley, in the *Angriff* :

"This time the cesspool of Serbian intrigue and blood-thirstiness must be eradicated root and stem."

#### DIRTY DOGS.

The other day the *Daily Mail* printed an article about dogs in time of war, and the writer was soon left in no doubt about his outsiderhood by the angry hordes of dog lovers, who did not set their pets upon him, but fell on him themselves. "I have been pursued," he writes, "with ferocious abuse. My morals, character, ancestors, and progeny have been viciously attacked by people who do not know me, for things I did not say," and he tells us of one lady who wrote "the flag of Britain is the flag of Dogdom." Heaps of correspondents wrote that they greatly preferred dogs to children, as being more grateful and less critical, and the wretched author in his second article was reduced to defending his preference for children by pointing out that children can, and do, grow up to become members of the R.A.F. ! One of the arguments used for dogs against children is that dogs have to have licences, costing 7/6, thus helping the Exchequer, whereas the parents of children take out no licences, but on the contrary expect to be let off part of their income tax.

I suppose in no other country, and in no other generation here, has there been so much dog nonsense, or so many people who have lost all sense of proportion about dogs. Disraeli used to give the advice to young men, that flattery was the thing if you wanted to get on. "Everybody likes it," he said, "and when you come to royalty, put it on with a trowel." That is what the success of dogs rests on, flattery, the way they suggest that in their eyes you are extremely fine. People also like them because they are so easily imposed upon by virtue of their abiding ignorance. People who are afraid to look the human race in the face, because of the

sins and meannesses on their conscience, can keep a dog and cut a fine figure in front of him. But it is a pity that the chosen companion of man should have such very low tastes and think stains and stinks and smells among the most fascinating and delightful things in the world. To take a dog for a walk from lamp-post to lamp-post, or on an outing to smell other dogs, is about as lowly and humiliating an office as can fall to a human being, yet many proud people spend their later years with that as one of the principal offices of their ignoble day.

#### PAPAL PERSPICUITY.

For lovers of understatement I quote this, from *The Times Literary Supplement* review of Father H. E. G. Rope's biography of Benedict XV:—

"Benedict evidently recognized quite clearly that he was not in the same position as a Gregory VII or an Innocent III, and that he was bound to act upon different political principles."

#### IMPROVING THE YOUNGER PITT.

Back in town after the personal appearance at Blackpool, Phyllis Calvert. She was up there for preview of "Kipps" at opera house. And she made her first speech.

She's to be the love interest in "Pitt the Younger," with Robert Donat, starting at Shepherd's Bush next month. "Pitt's love life seems to have been negligible," she says, "but I'm told they're building it up a bit to make a part for me."

(From a Theatrical gossip-column).

#### ARMY LIFE.

Whatever recent reforms have done for the men, I find it hard to believe that officers have a better time to-day than they did when soldiers were "Soldiers of the Queen, me lad!" My authority is the immortal Ouida, who describes in much lush detail what it used to mean to be in the Life Guards. Bertie Cecil, "Beauty of the Brigade," second son of Viscount Roynallieu, and his friend Seraph, Marquis of Rockingham, and heir to the Duke of Lyonesse—how well they did themselves, living lives very unlike the Marquis of Rockingham of history who spent his time leading "the main body of the Whigs" in George III's Parliaments. Beauty, who commanded Ouida's unqualified admiration, did himself better than any other character in fiction, before he so mistakenly left the British Army for the French Colonial forces. He lay on the softest of soft sofas, with a great meerscham bowl



wreathing "a face of as much delicacy and brilliancy as a woman's, handsome, thoro'bred, languid, nonchalant, with a certain latent recklessness under the impassive calm of habit, and a singular softness given to the large, dark hazel eyes by the unusual length of the lashes," and he went on parade with "a dainty, filmy, handkerchief, all perfume, point and embroidery, with the interlaced B.C. and the crest on the corner," and after a spell of duty, "unlimited sodas, three pipes smoked silently over Delphius Demirep's last novel, a bath well dashed with eau-de-cologne and some glasses of Anisette restored him a little," and even so he was full of depression all through dinner at the American Embassy and at the Duchess of Lydiard-Tregozes reception, when the prettiest French Countess of her time asked him if anything was the matter. "Yes," said Bertie, with a sigh and a profound melancholy, in what the woman called his handsome Spanish eyes, "I have had a great misfortune ; we have been on duty all day."

#### LETTERS TO THE PAPERS.

A man has just died in St. Francisco who claims to have been the world's champion letter-writer to the papers. He gave his score as 78,000, but he did not say, and no one was going to check, how many had been published, and how many were the same letter sent to a great number of papers simultaneously. Most Editors, in proportion to the dignity of their journals, dismiss all circulars, with a snort at being thought of collectively as "the Press." Nor did he say whether he wrote at length. A late President of Corpus, Oxford, republished his letters to *The Times* as a book, to show the range of his interests and pungency of his views, but although he had many letters in, they were all succinct. The best letter I ever received came from a man who wanted to urge in public the importance of covering over the rivers in West Africa with boards, to make communication more reliable. He ended by saying he would not have ventured to publish his idea if it had been his own, but as it had been revealed to him by God he thought he should not keep it to himself. And he closed, gratefully, with the words : "God is always revealing things of this sort to me. Isn't God jolly ?"

#### THE LIGHTS GO OUT.

War has come with a vengeance to the Vatican City. The bar has been closed, and closed by the Cardinal Secretary of State from fear, fear lest bitter political arguments should take place among the many nationalities now represented or sheltering

there. Hearing of Cardinal Maglione's action, I am reminded of a man I knew, called Jelly. He was a politician in South Australia, and the great object, he told me, which had brought him into public life was to get a law made that all bottles must be quite square and with no necks, so that in your drunken rage you have no club or missile ready to your trembling hand.

#### FAME.

Men sit pretty lightly to ecclesiastical history, but none more lightly than the American drug-store-keeper to whom Robert Peight showed a copy of his *Life of St. Thomas of Canterbury*. Oh, yes," said the storekeeper, "I've heard of him. Written a book about Soviet Russia, hasn't he?"

#### THE FLOWERS (OF SPEECH) THAT BLOOM IN THE SPRING.

"So Eden is trebly wrong, all wrong. He is so wrong that he can only be described as a bloomer. He is ignorant and he tells us," etc.—The Rome Radio.

#### THE PATRON SAINT OF FORTITUDE.

In the Sarum breviary there is a hymn to St. Chad which tells his truly English passion for the cold tub.

"Engaged in prayer he still would stand

In icy water cold,

Yet never would indulge in those

That warmth and comfort hold."

The English, however, at least the Mercians from whom Nottingham men derive, thought it altogether too much that they should be asked to become Christians, and take to cold baths, in one great baptismal plunge. They thought about it, as their way, and did a deal, they became Christians in the seventh century, leaving the other matter over. After a period for mature consideration on the brink, in the reign of Queen Anne, they decided themselves. "Chad bathing," as it was called, was recommended by a Lichfield doctor, Sir John Floyer, as both safe and pleasurable, and in the early eighteenth century Midlanders, like other Englishmen, led by John Locke, began to take to cold baths; they also began to take to disbelief in the more important part of St. Chad's missionary teaching.

#### MR. CHUBB.

No man that is not utterly unacquainted with the state of things among us can be ignorant, that in the last, and especially

in the present age, there have been many books published, the manifest design of which was to set aside revealed religion. Never in any country where Christianity is professed, were there such repeated attempts to subvert its divine authority, carried on sometimes under various disguises, and at other times without any disguise at all."

Would you think so loud a lament necessary as early as 1752. So it is, for it is the opening of John Leland's *View of the Principal Deistical Writers that have appeared in England in the Last and Present Century*, an entertaining work whose two volumes show what ravages had been made, starting with Lord Herbert of Cherbury's natural religion in the time of Charles I, and so well under way by George II's reign that the Christian writers were on the defensive. Nor was any writer more in need of confutation than Mr. Chubb, whose posthumous writings made a lot of work. I have long had an interest in Mr. Chubb—"He was, though not a man of learning, regarded by many as a person of strong natural parts and acuteness, and who had a clear manner of expression. He was the author of a great number of tracts, in some of which he put on the appearance of a friend to Christianity; though it was no difficult matter to discern that his true intention was to betray it." What I rather like about him is that he printed his posthumous works in his own lifetime, to see the effect.

#### THE STREET CALLED CROOKED.

A few years ago, the thieves of Damascus, organized into a Guild, went on strike. Their purpose was to show how it really does take all sorts to make a world, and what repercussions would follow if thieving ceased. They wanted, in particular, to impress upon the police the great truth that if there were no criminals there could be no policemen. The public would refuse to pay. Policemen must catch some wrongdoers, or the public will get angry, but they must not catch them all, or crime cannot go on, so reasoned the thieves of Damascus, who thought the police had been getting altogether too efficient. But I am sorry to say I forget how the strike ended. I do remember, however, a very entertaining speech at an English legal dinner when Mr. J. D. Cassels explained the growing popularity of short sentences and binding men over for first offences, by saying that the majestic structure of the Law, with all its ermine and silk, all depended upon the supply of the basic raw material, the criminals who, alas, were not so plentiful as they used to be, and had to be preserved with care, and used over and over again. I wonder whether incorrigibles, appearing in the dock

for the ninetieth time, ever urge this point. I have heard recently of an unmarried mother who took a very haughty line with the official of a society which was offering to help her. "It's the likes of me," she said, "who make you and your job possible, and you ought to be very grateful to us."

#### CAPITALIZE YOUR DEFECTS.

Already, I read in the public prints, the United States has found time to get out a short list of fifty, chosen from eighteen thousand original entries, for the final choice of a Freckle King and a Freckle Queen from the boys and girls of the United States. This, I gather, is not a new competition. The judges, by now, know all the tricks, and in particular are on the look-out for freckles that have been painted on, to swell the crowd. The painted freckle is a great temptation, because whether the prize goes to quantity or pattern, the cheat can help. The word 'defect' in the heading to this passage is perhaps all wrong for freckles, because for some wholly unexplained reason freckles have a way of suggesting honesty, and in a world of salesmen and politicians that is an enormous advantage. But the principle behind the freckle competition is particularly valuable for defects. It is a commonplace of proverbial philosophy that if men have misfortunes, like humps, they tend to hate mankind, and to be dangerous, like Richard III and Quilp. If, however, they had won the United Kingdom championship for the roundest or most artistic hump, they would have had no grievance, and would have had that generally co-operative attitude towards the world, that desire that a society which has given them a prize shall continue, which marks prize-winners and makes them into good citizens. So the wise priest, eyeing the black sheep lolling in the back pew and shuffling out before the prayer for the King, would not frown as he came down from the altar and saw the shabby sight. He would arrange for Black Sheep to win the prize for Pew Department, in order to give him a new pride in going to Church.

#### FLUTE THE BELLows-MENDER.

The trouble, as it seems to me, with all this new American psychology of getting the right side of people, is that it always means flattering them for their weaknesses. "Flattery," says someone in Shakespeare, "is the bellows blows up sin," and it is really the greatest of all failures in Christian charity to play the bellows to other people's sins, seeing how near at hand the sins

always are. It was finely said by the Reverend Sydney Smith that among the minor duties of life he did not know of one more important, or more generally neglected, than that of not giving praise where praise was not due. It does not follow that you need to be ungracious. What you need to be is precise and percipient, finding just the one thing that can be praised in a bad performance, as did the old Scotchman who took me out on a salmon river and watched my noisy and salmonless casting for some time. He uttered no rebukes, but he proffered no false praise. What he found to say, after a time, was, "Ye certainly know how to cover a lot of water."

#### BRIDGING THE ATLANTIC.

Is it a sign of the way we are drawing closer to the United States, and want to learn their ways, that someone has been advertising in *The Times* for a second-hand electric chair?

#### LETTERS TO THE PAPERS.

Meanwhile, I read in *Cavalcade* how Pope Pius XI worked. The account began "Occasionally the Pope sits down, writes a letter, sends it to the Vatican newspaper, *Osservatore Romano*. Weighty words in the letter are published in many languages throughout the world and eagerly, scanned by the world's 360,000,000-odd Catholics." And a little later we hear how one Pope at any rate kept himself up to the mark: "Last week he sat down, wrote himself a short but hard-hitting encyclical."

#### ABRACADABRA.

The nineteenth century saw the end of many old institutions, and among them apparently was the blessed word "Abracadabra." This had been a pagan charm, written down and worn round the neck, for centuries. It still lives in conjurors' patter, but it is not taken very seriously. Chaucer had a very interesting, and rather doubtfully orthodox view of charms. He thought that perhaps they were suffered by God to have a certain efficacy, so that folk should give more faith and reverence to the great name of God when they saw what lesser names, like "Abracadabra," could do.

#### DEAD UNTIL FURTHER NOTICE.

I read in that entertaining publication *The Catholic Digest*, Minnesota, which has now reached its twelfth number, something I never knew about the great Ruskin: that when he was about to begin one of those big books of his (I have thirty-nine of them, each a foot high), he would send out a card to his

friends, which read : "Mr. J. Ruskin is about to begin a work of great importance, and therefore begs that in reference to calls and correspondence you will consider him dead for the next few months." He kept on coming to life again and then passing out once more, and it seems to me that he managed things rather well, very much better than the people who do not say that they have a mighty enterprise afoot and continually have to snub mankind with talk of their work. Herbert Spencer's ear-flaps, which he pulled down when the conversation bored him, have achieved immortality, and should be exhibited when the *Sunday Times* Book Exhibition starts including literary relics. But Ruskin's cards have pleasanter possibilities. I have often wished there was a social convention, a card which one could send from time to time to friends one had not seen, assuring them that they were still wished infinitely well. I suppose Christmas cards are meant to do this, but some people object to Christmas cards because Christmas is the season of goodwill, and they feel that it has been an act of virtue on the sender's part, as though he had with an effort forgiven them for something because it was Christmas.

#### THOUGHTS ON THE CLERGY.

It is a sound lay instinct that expects the clergy to keep up a higher standard than other men. They have unusual advantages, and can preach themselves stirring sermons at any moment of the day ; and it is accordingly felt that the efficacy of their practical work can be judged by the effect they manage to have upon themselves. Perhaps the laity do not sufficiently allow for the unusual difficulties and strain of the ecclesiastical estate, as though it was not really difficult to be always and officially good. For my own part I never read Church history without feeling that I entirely understand whenever I come upon what are called clerical abuses. The English are particularly censorious when they read or write history, and I think one reason is that the English, being an imaginative people, lovers of rhetoric but seldom gifted with it, are a race of mute inglorious Chrysostoms. They are a very clerical race, who dislike the clergy only because they like the clerical office so much that they do not think anyone should claim to monopolize such treats as preaching. Every man, they hold, has the right and duty to preach, and few are the novelists or dramatists who do not slip in a little sermon somewhere. It follows that sin in clergymen is resented as reflecting on the efficacy of exhortations and pulpits and words in season.

It follows naturally on thinking of ministers of religion as ministers of the word, in the narrow sense, men whose business is not with worship or the life of the Sacraments, but wholly with persuasion.

#### BRIGHTEN UP THE TONGUE.

From John Wanamaker's stores there comes a semi-official exhortation to American men and women to brighten themselves up in the Spring by getting hold of some new words and, in particular, some new similes. It is not, explains the Directress of of Publicity, so very difficult. Instead of saying, "Like water off a duck's back," think of another animal, not a duck, and your friends will listen with quickened attention. She suggests saying "As cold and damp as a dog's nose," but this seemed to me an unhappy combination, if cold and damp were meant to be given an unfavourable connotation. Then she suggested saying "She sat up like an exclamation point," which offers a wide range of simple similes like "Sprawling in the chair like a comma," and "flat as a hyphen." She said the sale of Wanamaker's lemon pies had greatly increased since they began to say not "Our lemon pies are excellent," but "Our lemon pie trembles as it is set down before you." Perhaps there will be a great renaissance of letters as a result of these attentions of salesmanship.

#### SPRING CLEANING BEGINS.

As Ash Wednesday approaches, Catholics are brought into touch with what is, perhaps, the oldest kind of soap. Some scholars connect the cleansing symbolism of ashes with fire, saying that the Parsees and the Brahmins have used ashes for purification on this basis. More practical men say it comes from countries where water is scarce, and sand and ashes are used instead. Tertullian talks about sackcloth and ashes, and they seem to be one of the Jewish symbols which the Church continued. But they were kept originally for public penitents, people whom we do not see in our churches nowadays, which seems, perhaps, odd, unless it be thought that we all on Ash Wednesday achieve that status. In the Middle Ages, public penitents used to be expelled from a church, being cast out by the Bishop, as Adam, the first man, had been cast out of Paradise, and Urban II, the Pope of the Crusades, decreed ashes for everybody. The English, at any rate, were already by then firmly fixed in the Ash Wednesday ritual.

The Kai Lung books have an extraordinary power of binding together all the people who discover that they like them. Nothing pleased me more, last year, when I had given a talk on the wireless about humorous books, and I received what dealers call a holograph, a letter of gracious commendation and acceptance of my proffered praises from Mr. Ernest Bramah. I think it is, perhaps, by this time not a secret that his real name is Ernest Smith, but he took pity on the cataloguers and compilers of indexes and has enshrined an invented name in English literature. Nothing is pleasanter about the Chinese than the way Europeans live among them for years and decades, and then come away and argue fiercely about whether the Chinese can really be said to have any religion or not, or no more than a kind of gentleman's code and an old school Confucian tie. The best remark I have seen lately to explain both the Chinese and the Japanese, was to the effect that their languages are so very difficult, even to themselves, that they live permanently, if slightly, deranged in consequence. But this Western judgment is likely to reconcile the East in union against it. It will, however, be believed in the United States, where there is a steady move towards a simpler vocabulary. It is argued that in an efficiently run world, "Yep" and "Nope" should be sufficient as well as being fairly highly Biblical.

#### INSECTARIANISM.

From a bookseller's catalogue :

"OWEN (L.) *The Running Register* : recording a true relation of the state of the English Colledges, Seminaries and Cloysters in all forraine parts. Together with a brief and compendious discourse of the Lives, Practices, Coozenage, Impostures and Deceits of all our English Monks, Friers, Jesuites, and Seminarie Priests in generall, *Robert Milbourne*, 1626: *The Unmasking of All popish Monks, Friers, and Jesuits, Or, A Treatise of their Genealogie, beginnings, proceedings, and present state.* Together with some briefe observations of their Treasons, Murders, Fornications, Impostures, Blasphemies, and sundry other abominable impieties. Written as a Caveat or forewarning for Great Britaine to take heed in time of these Romish locusts, *J. H. for George Gibs*, 1628 ; in 1 vol, small 4to, *calf gilt, Newcastle Arms on sides, g.e., by C. Smith* £7 7s. *ib.*"

#### HOW TO WRITE TO THE EDITOR.

Those who submit MSS. to Editors have many forms of covering letter, but I have rarely had one which so warmed



my heart as that which came from Eastern Europe the other day :

"DEAR SIR,—I'll try every week to send you one or two articles. Sincerely I want to be your very grave contributor.

"If my article shall be not acceptable then you do not send me them back, but with clear conscience you put it into box as good for nothing.

Yours sincerely."

So many people like to reflect on editorial consciences, that it is pleasant to be talked to like that.

#### CALLING NAMES IN HISTORY.

The widespread idea that the music hall has been killed by the cinema, a happily much exaggerated notion, was no doubt present in the head of the man who recently asked Miss Christina Foyle for a book called, he thought, "*The Decline and Fall of the Holborn Empire*." I suppose no title has ever had more effect than Gibbon's as propaganda for a particular view. The Roman Empire was the womb from which there emerged the Christian civilization which Gibbon hated. "Middle Ages" is equally a term of belittlement, and was coined by the seventeenth century to cover the vast stretch of time which separated them from the polish of antiquity. It is a great handicap for Catholic teachers to have to work within this false framework, instead of making the centre of history the crescendo movement which begins with the Incarnation and culminates in the Catholic civilization, amid whose ruins we still maintain ourselves.

#### WHAT'S YOUR FANCY ?

Among the minor daily pleasures are the letters in the popular papers, especially the picture ones. This one appeared in Wednesday's *Daily Mirror* :

In answer to the question in Tuesday's issue : "What is religion ?" I submit the following definition :

"Religion may be defined as the feelings, acts and experiences of individual men, in their solitude, so far as they apprehend themselves to stand in relation to whatever they may consider the divine."

Hull.

CHAS. S. WEBSTER.

If the moderns do not always show to advantage compared with the Fathers of the Church, although they have the strategic gain of speaking later in the debate, it is perhaps because they are made to be so very much terser. I can imagine earlier theologians

taking several pages over a subject like this. "Enough to cover a sixpence" is the rule to-day for theology as for salts.

#### CATHEDRALS, VERY EARLY STYLE.

Whenever I see the appeals for Liverpool Cathedral, I think of the advantages St. Thomas the Apostle had over Dr. Downey, if the legend is well-founded, which tells us how he obtained from some Indian Rajah or other of the day *carte blanche* in return for the promise to produce, in a few years, the most wonderful temple the world had ever seen. When the potentate returned and demanded to see what St. Thomas had produced, the Saint said, "Yes, I have kept my undertaking, and the temple is already built." But when his patron demanded to see it, St. Thomas explained that it was in the minds and hearts of the Indians whom he had converted. But these games are out of the question in Liverpool.

#### CREEPY STORIES.

The Soviet is very down on ghost stories and a Mohammedan priest has been condemned to death for telling ghost stories to children, "thus corrupting their morals"! Ghost stories are commonly told in a low voice and with low lights, and the feeling that the Ogpu may be listening will now heighten the effect. The Soviet hates the uncanny and the mysterious, and can claim to be doing its best to show that life can be sinister and terrible without them, and that ghosts are not really necessary provided there is no shortage of clanking chains.

#### A BLOW FOR WEASEL-WORSHIPPERS.

Those who always thought the weasel deserved a better fate than just going pop, will be glad to know that he is not without honour, if not here, then in Japan. The Japanese as they appear in the English Press these days are not represented as over kind-hearted, but in fact there are many variants of Buddhism which carry good nature almost to the verge of sentimentality. The police, according to a recent account in the *Observer*, have just suppressed a sect which made it its business to offer adoration not merely to weasels, but to snails and bed bugs as well. The names of these creatures were written on pieces of paper and the paper was then reverently placed on the altar by members of the Great Nippon Imperial Buddhist Chancel Praying Worshipers' Society. It is true there was a business side to this religion, whose founder was eventually prosecuted on the old familiar

and all too worldly charge of obtaining money under false pretences. He sold a woman a charm which was meant to drive out the spirits of 550 whales who stood in the way, as well they might, of her obtaining a suitable husband.

#### GOING TOO SMOOTHLY.

So many of the professions either have a rule about no hair on the face, or a convention quite as strong as a rule, that priests are not alone in foregoing beards and whiskers, and a huge vested interest in soap and razors has grown up round the new fashion. It is a striking change from the last century. Then the men wanted to look responsible and grave. Now they want to look young. But the hairy sort have their triumphs. At the recent Rat and Mouse Show a rat which would have won the prize for every conceivable merit was disqualified because he had no whiskers. In vain its owners explained that another rat, a whisker pirate, had bitten them off. The defect was judged decisive. So, too, missionaries in many remote parts of the world cannot hope for full marks without a beard.

#### LITTLE LORD STALINEROY.

It is reassuring to hear from Lady Astor that Stalin is "a very nice little fellow, brown, bright-eyed and well-conducted."

#### A PET ENTHUSIASM.

The old phrase, common in the mouths of the discouraged, that they are walking about to save funeral expenses, seems, according to Lord Horder, to be the general condition of humanity. Speaking in favour of cremation, he said that earth burial is a luxury the world can no longer afford. Nothing is more calculated to make us feel small, and, Lord Horder hopes, to become small. If we reduce ourselves to a fine grey powder, there may still be room for us somewhere, although the management cannot promise that even so, all our remains will be able to sit together. Those who are accustomed in the pages of Wells' *Outline of History* to pity the men of pre-historic days, must allow that, at any rate, they have the laugh of us here. They could take a great mound apiece for a roomy tomb without any Lord Horder to pretend that the space underneath the earth was in such demand that it was the act of a hog to ask for six feet by two, ten or twelve feet down. Encouraged, as ever, by the feeling that there is a doctor present, Bishop Barnes has chimed in, urging municipalities to build as many crematoria as possible.

A prize should then be given to the town which builds most in the shortest time. What a curious thing it is, the enthusiasm which the idea of cremation breeds. Disposal of remains by fire is not the Christian tradition, but it is exceedingly old and widespread, and it is not a subject, one would have thought, for ardent and rhetorical over-statement, yet its leading advocates talk with an intensity of feeling as though being reduced to fine ash was the one thing which they were really keen about for the human race.

#### THE OYSTER COLUMN.

Among the Japanese there have been stirrings of compunction, that they are not giving oysters an altogether square deal. Thoughts of the holocausts of oysters, cut off in their splendid prime, in the ruthless search for pearls have led to repentance, and a desire to make amends. So a commemorative pillar, made appropriately of pearls, has been erected to the oysters. The Walrus and the Carpenter, in full inter-species conference, never achieved so much practical idealism. They had good reasons of course, for the sands do not take kindly to monuments. All the same they adjourned, after their very full agenda, without any nice thoughts of this order. It might be thought that of all the creatures that live in the sea, oysters least need anything in the way of *aere perennius monumentum*. Their shells, if they cannot always save, can often commemorate them. The archaeologist excavating the Roman Villa, or the medieval refectory, finds numbers of them, calling down the centuries the news that the world has understood about meals this long time past.

#### THE NAMELESS SQUIRTERS OF INK.

One of the pleasures of editorship is the anonymous letter, generally in angular female handwriting, and for some strange reason nearly always with a Chelsea postmark. I wonder if the writers really live in villages, where they would be found out, and post their letters to reckless artists in Chelsea, men who scorn the conventions and are ready to post anything. The last anonymous letter, signed "Regular Reader," attacks Canon Campana's letter, and roundly calls it a hoax. But if the writer thinks the Canon does not exist, she had better go out to Lugano and try and get permission to study under the professor at the seminary there. The worst of anonymous letters is that however amusing they may be, they cannot be printed without looking as if they had been written for a joke.

I have been reading a book called *My Editor Says*, all about journalism and how to be a success. Make up your mind, says this book, that your business is to help the reader who has no time to waste. He wants to know the news quickly—if possible by reading the headlines. Your job, therefore, is to tell the news in the headlines as clearly and pithily as you can, and never to write headlines which severely puzzle. You will see how this can be done if you reflect upon what most interests the human mind. The favourite subjects of the British people are—

Love affairs,  
Money,  
Food.

Shortly after reading this cold comfort for religious journals, I walked down the street and one of the first news posters I saw, proclaimed "The Fall of Man." "What, again!" I exclaimed, not best pleased. But it proved to be the old, the original, the primeval and catastrophic blunder that was, after all these difficult intervening years, being served up again. In their pre-occupation with love affairs, money and food, the newspaper public had forgotten all about it.

#### LIVES OF LEARNED LEISURE.

I see that the Russians, who have been having many setbacks lately, have now had to abolish the system of paying their University Professors by the amount of work they actually do. Piece rates are to give place to the old system of an annual salary. I suppose that scientists, like geologists and astronomers, who deal all the time in huge units of time, must think of an annual salary as other men think of payment by the hour. The essence of the Professorial life is, or ought to be, leisure; and I always feel that retiring ages are rather a mistake, as they are likely to make the Professors feel that they are being hurried and rushed into immature work.

#### A PETER AND HIS PENCE.

One of the nicest stories in *Il Novellino*, the hundred old tales, which date from the thirteenth century, is: "Of the Great Act of Charity which a Banker did for the Love of God."

"Peter the banker was a man of great wealth, and was so charitable that he distributed all his possessions to the poor.

Then when he had given everything away, he sold himself and gave the whole price to the poor."

The Big Five to note.

Many a priest must envy the rector of Didling, whose musical difficulties have been solved by the appearance of a phantom choirboy who sings in perfect tune and who is occasionally accompanied by an Æolian harp, which comes out of the roof. The vicar, who knows his parishioners well, is absolutely clear that this voice cannot possibly belong to any of his parishioners.

#### THE LAND OF VIRTUE.

I see the Japanese have been pulling themselves together and have been holding a "national spiritual mobilisation," during which nearly everybody under twenty-five has been arrested for spending their time less usefully and sensibly than they might. Some seven thousand youths and 340 girls were rounded up in this campaign, on the ground that they "appear to have too much leisure without any useful means of employing it." Those found drinking and smoking, under age, were nearly a thousand. In most cases the punishments awarded were one or two days' detention to make them a little older.

#### NOTE THE CARAMELS.

I have just seen a book issued by the Information and Publicity Department of the South Manchuria Railway Company, of which the title is "Japanese Spirit in Full Bloom: a Collection of Episodes," and it is a story of Japanese good deeds shining away in the naughty Chinese world. There are pictures of Chinese prisoners receiving kind first-aid treatment, and underneath it says, "Note the refreshments, as cider and caramels, given the Chinese captives," and there are other pictures of the captives receiving "Delicious refreshments from the generous captors." Let us hope all these things are true and that now that propaganda plays such a large part in modern war, prisoners will benefit from it. Caramels are none the less caramels if they are handed round for the sake of being photographed. The English of this booklet is rather appealing. Successive headings are: "Chinese wounded soldier weeps over the hospitality of his captors"; "Kind Sergeant guards a captive General"; "Flower plucked on the battlefield sent to fallen comrades"; "No racial love in North China"; and there is a particularly moving account headed: "Plead of a mother whose son was not ordered to duty."

#### THE DISAPPOINTING CHINESE.

It begins: "The gentle words of a gentle mother whose son was unable to go to the field deeply impressed the hearts of the

members of the war staff. Mrs. Yone Wada addressed a letter to the War Department and implored the authorities to accept her son into the expeditionary forces. So sympathetic was the reaction produced upon the high officials, that due consideration was accorded the appeal, for the proper command received instructions to grant the desire." The blending of official phraseology with human feeling is very well done. Mrs. Wada said: "I am greatly impressed by the chivalry of our officers and men fighting in North and South China. My humble son, Kazuo, recently received instructions to report to active duty, but soon returned home, due to his poor physical condition. So depressed was he over the sad decision that presently he refused food or drink. I met great difficulty in consoling his down-hearted condition, explaining that there were other ways to serve his country, but he flatly exclaimed, 'At a time when even women, horses and dogs take to the field of battle I cannot bear the thought of remaining quietly at home!'" She goes on: "Were Kazuo's conditions to continue, it would mean his death. There is no need to grieve should he die in a glorious manly manner, but should life end now it would certainly be deplorable. It would be a better death for my son if he could dispose even one of the enemy's soldiers for the sake of the empire. Is there any way a mother's appeal such as this can be heard?" The book explains at the end, "We regret that we had little to speak for China, but it is the fault of the Chinese who simply did not possess these virtuous qualities," and it concludes: "Now that we are compelled to negotiate with China through bullets and bombs, from trenches and tochkas, we ask one favour of the Chinese: Please fight like men civilized and brave, r enemy though you be you have our love and respect. God ve you from betraying this love and respect."

#### "KNOWING HOW DEEP WITHIN THE LITURGIES LIE HID THE MYSTERIES."

"The tic-tac business is a very lucrative calling, for some of the best men earn as much as £10 per day. The manner in which they frequently change their codes is remarkably clever, and completely baffles the would-be discoverer of them. I heard a nice story concerning three men at the game who were very great friends. One of them, a Roman Catholic, died, and the others attended his funeral. While the priest was making the passes and incantations usual at such ceremonies, one man turned to the other and remarked: 'I—fear poor Bill has no

got much chance, as I see they offer 100 to 8 against him.”

From *Horse and Hound*, March 25th, 1938.

“WITHOUT WHICH NO GENTLEMAN’S LIBRARY IS COMPLETE.”

Among the more extraordinary books whose company I am proud and pleased to enjoy, year after year, is one in particular, not easily come by. It is the Jubilee Juggins’ book *How I Lost £250,000 in Two Years*, that lively record of how to run through a fortune in the later years of Queen Victoria’s reign, and a book which ends in final impenitence, the Juggins explaining that he could not honestly say that he would behave very differently should he come into another fortune.

#### NOT PLAYING THE GAME.

From a letter to the *Daily Mirror*: “If Hitler and Mussolini had been cricketers there would not have been any of these present threats to European peace.”

#### THE HEROIC AGE OF THE CHURCH.

We are accustomed, when we read of the penances and mortifications of the Desert Fathers, and not merely of those chaste spirits, but of ordinary Christians through the first three-quarters of the Church’s journey to date, to feel that we have grown rather effete and unprepared for whacking great penances. Macarius, the Egyptian, because he had killed some gnats in what he considered unjustifiable anger, removed himself to a remote part of the desert, where the gnats were known to be so large and fierce that they could pierce the hides of elephants, and gave himself up to them for six months; and at the end, says his chronicler, his friends could only recognize him by his voice. Cruelty to animals is the only reason which most modern humanitarians would think could justify penances of such dimensions. Ordinary Christians have steadily retreated till they only know of the requirements of a day of canonical penance when, being anxious to understand clearly about indulgences, they ask what canonical penance used to be. Let us, however, take heart. A generation may come, and before very long, who will look back on us as admirably sturdy members of the Church Militant, ascetics who did not hesitate to use the sacramentals hardily and without any comforting mechanical aids, who boldly dipped their hands into holy water stoups, not minding if the holy water



splashed them. These reflections come to the mind in turning the pages of a recent catalogue which advertises, among other ecclesiastical articles, the "Gloria" Patent Holy Water Fount, which is declared to be :—

"An attractive and pleasing novelty. Just the gift for Christmas! This patent Holy Water Fount is stylish and hygienic. It eliminates wastage and soiling of the Holy Water. Just press the button and the Water wets the finger tip. 'Three types as per illustration. One Price, 7/6 each.' "

Or there is this :—

"Another style of the 'Gloria' Patent Holy Water Fount. On pressing the button, in addition to the Holy Water a religious hymn is played as well."

#### POLICEWOMEN.

It is well known that modern policemen are men of information and education. It is less well known that policewomen have their own jolly paper, the *Policewoman's Review*, which is always full of things it is as well to know. It has a sense of humour, this review, and tells the tale of one policewoman who entered a railway carriage with a colleague, both in uniform. "Two women entered and were overheard to say: 'What are they? Men or women?' With a scathing glance at us and in a withering tone, the other replied 'Females.' "

The duties of women policemen are many and include not merely "supervision of pawnshops," but "assisting in the settlement of family disputes." One is to be appointed for Hampshire, and Bournemouth hopes to get her.

#### THE BETTER WAY.

I was shown one of the most moving inscriptions in books which I have seen for a long time, when the nephew of John Richard Green, the historian, and the heir to the *Short History of England*, showed me the fly-leaf of his uncle's *Stray Studies*. There was written, "To the author, with love, from the publisher." This is surely better than that throwing up of the moral sponge which is manifested in the choice by a new London publisher of the telegraphic address—"Barabbas, London."

#### STALIN NOT IDLE.

Several Alaskan Eskimos have been converted to the Catholic religion, following hard work by missionaries in the ice-belt of the polar circle. At present they often journey five miles by

canoe, along the narrow channels between the floes, to visit the Siberian Eskimos who are not Christians and who live on Soviet territory. The current number of the magazine *Jesuit Missions*, tells the story of a Catholic Eskimo who once asked a Siberian chief :

"Who created you ? "

The answer came at once :

"Stalin created us."

"Who made the universe ? "

"Stalin."

"Who made the sky, the moon and the stars ? "

"Stalin."

"Who made the great whales ? "

"Stalin. Stalin made the whole universe, and it is he who provides our means of subsistence."

Then the Catholic Eskimo asked the simple question :

"Did your ancestors have whales and fishes ? "

"Of course," answered the Russian.

"How old is Stalin ? "

"Oh, about forty-five."

"Well," replied the Catholic Eskimo triumphantly, "how can he have created the whales before he was born ? "

That was too much for the Muscovite chief, who retired.

It is said that these chiefs are given a reward for teaching the people that Stalin is the Almighty, in Soviet Russia.

#### A DAUGHTER OF THE PLOUGH.

A friend told me the other day of an official examination in Germany, where one of the questions was "What comes after the Third Reich ? " One girl with a mathematical mind answered "The Fourth ! " She was failed as "morally immature ! " -

#### "IL FAUT CULTIVER NOTRE JARDIN."

Miss Georgia Davidson, one of the best known of the Chicago Policewomen, has lately retired. *The Policewoman's Review* wrote of her : "She is an expert shot and has carried a revolver for the past twenty years, but states that she has never had to use it on a woman. Like many another member of the police force, she is turning from criminals to flowers and intends to cultivate a garden."

I rubbed my eyes when I read in *The Star*, on Christmas Eve, the heading "Red Hat will be in charge of Rover Scouts," but Red Hat is not a great Red Indian Chief, it is the Rovers who will be in charge of the Hat.

But, perhaps, the Christmas prize for a newspaper ought to go to the City Editor of the *Sunday Express*, who began his page "One thousand, nine hundred and thirty-seven years ago, the shepherds were guided by the star in the East." So much for the Magi. Then he went on, "Market wise men are looking, at this time, for the star in the West. It is to the United States that people are now looking for hope and inspiration," and so on to American trade prospects.

#### LOSING NO TIME.

The trouble with all this university education is that people who are content to leave "Viennese Positivism" to one side, get such a flying start in the world of affairs. Few, however, start so flyingly as someone who has got a job before being born. The late King of Spain did this, but the achievement is rare outside Royal circles, and this particular job is Hollywood Royal. There is a film to be made called "Marie Antoinette," and one of the parts is that of the Dauphin of France, a new-born baby, so the Talent Scouts of the film company have been sent out to scour the globe to see if anyone is expecting to be born in the next few months and would like the position. They say they hope before long to return with a signed contract.

#### PRIVILEGED CLASSES.

The child may yell at being put into rehearsal straight away on birth, but really the curse of Adam could hardly be endured in a gentler form, but it remains a curse, all the more in a world where so many animals are achieving private means and independence. The other day we read how Teddy, who boasts of being the richest dog in the world—he is, of course, an American dog—has just come into £2,000 a year, but it is some consolation to know that the human race has not had its nose altogether thrust away from the trough, and that Teddy's dietician, though a human, has also been remembered in the will. It is a lucky thing for mankind that on the whole the animals which attract affection and legacies are only moderately long-lived. Dogs and cats inherit much more than geese, parrots or tortoises, but they enjoy their fortune for much briefer spells. There was a powerful letter in the *Daily Mirror* this week about our general selfishness

in praying for ourselves at Christmas instead of for animals, but the only time I went to St. Martin in the Fields, under a promise that I should hear a leading rationalist read the Lessons, there was a prayer "that no animal might be struck in anger in these islands through the coming week," a tall order perhaps, but a handsome one.

#### HOW TO GO DOWNHILL.

The American magazines, in their fierce competition with each other, have exhausted the after all limited field of positive advice about how to be a success, and they now write on all the things you can do to make sure of making a mess of everything. The November *Forum* had an article on "The Easy Art of Losing Friends," saying truly, if ponderously, that "falling off a log is an onerous procedure beside it."

#### HASTY HISTORY.

"And so on to Joan of Arc's well-beloved city, Rouen." This comes in an article called "A Cycle Trip to Spain" in the *Wide World Magazine*.

#### NO INTRODUCTIONS NEEDED.

I was pleased to read in an American magazine a new advertisement for the telephone service, to the effect that the telephone now offers better value than it had ever been able to do before, because there were far more names of people to ring up in the Telephone Directory. The splendid width and variety of choice was put forward as the great argument for taking out a subscription. And the telephone authorities were perhaps not very scrupulous in the way they suggested that by merely installing an instrument you had the freedom of the acquaintanceship, if not the friendship, of all other subscribers. The telephone it is well known, is proving the death of good political biography. Where the statesmen of a lifetime ago wrote notes to each other, which were carried round by messenger and preserved by the recipient, there is no record of a telephone call. And no one has issued his memoirs under the title: *The Life and Telephone Calls of So-and-So*.

#### ON POSTHUMOUS FAME.

Last week this column mentioned an unborn baby who was arranging to appear on the films. This week the balance is redressed by this moving account of a bid for posthumous dramatic fame. It is a Story in the "Reader's Digest."

"John Reed, a brooding, inept stage electrician, who spent his life yearning to play *Hamlet*, willed his skull to a Philadelphia theatre, to be used thereafter in the play as the skull of Yorick."

#### A HELPFUL MAN.

The telephone is, of course, highly dangerous for secrets. I was hearing the other day of a country postmaster in the Thames Valley whose eager interest in all his subscribers and their doings is such that he sometimes intervenes, and people have been surprised when he has rung up to say that he knows what it is they want to ask of the number to which they cannot get through, and that he can give them the information they would like, as he has learned it in the course of fixing up other calls to the same number. Deep plotters know this, and avoid the telephone. It is said that the origin of the enormously broad hats in China is not really anything to do with the sun, although the origins of most things can be traced back one way or another to the sun. These hats were the fruit of imperial wisdom, when an early Emperor saw that men could not plot unless they could whisper into each other's ears, so he decreed that hats should be worn of such breadth that whispering became impossible; and the long peace of China under its Emperors was, perhaps, the result.

#### SIGH OF RELIEF.

The *Film Weekly* has some comforting remarks. Under the heading "Papal Producers" it writes: "Interesting news has reached me of the intention of the Papacy to enter film production.

"Those who know the extent of Catholic interest in films will not be surprised. It appears that the Pope spent part of Christmas afternoon viewing films and that he has personally been devoting great deal of attention to the question of the cinema as an instrument of propaganda and education . . . The international character of the Catholic Church gives its officials exceptional opportunities of gauging the influence of the cinema," leading up to the happy announcement: "The Pope has announced that the attendance of Christians at cinemas is quite in order."

#### ONE SIDE OF THE PAPER ONLY.

A rather grim work has come in for review from Messrs. Macmillan—nothing less than a conspectus of examinations in Great Britain and Northern Ireland, describing how, with skill or the lack of it, the whole lifetime can now easily be spent preparing for and entering for examinations. It used to be

thought that China led the world in devotion to this cult, the Chinese being tougher and more impassive in the face of human suffering. Chinese candidates, I have been told, for I have never been one, are put into wooden huts like bathing machines, supplied with all the ink and paper they can require, and are then left to write down all they know. There are few age limits, and old Chinamen of seventy can be seen presenting themselves, over and over again, for examinations which for fifty years they have consistently failed to pass. So at least pundits have assured me ; but I suspect these sights were to be seen before 1912, rather than in the New China. But if the East is failing, the West is catching up, and examinations are coming to loom larger than any other human institution in the ordinary English home.

#### WHAT HAPPENED AT OXFORD.

Some time ago, in writing the review of a play, I commented on the opportunity dramatists were missing in not making this highly dramatic theme, the Examination upon which All Depends, the centre of their plot. A few days later I received the MS. of a play called "Label," by a would-be dramatist, a powerful five-act tragedy, set at Oxford, and crowded with incident. The hero, I remember, had to get a first, because he was in love with a woman don whose pride forbade her to marry anyone who had not got a first. In these circumstances he could not bear to be told the result, although the kindly professor of Sanskrit, who played a big part, was anxious to make things easy for him. No. Our hero asked his friend to put a post card on the mantelpiece, vertically if he had got the first, horizontally if he had not. He got it, and his friend put up the vertical post card, but in the fatal interval a jealous villain stole into the room and placed the post card on its side. The hero entered, despaired, and took poison, and expired just as the woman don, who had heard the good news of the School's results, rushed into the room to congratulate and embrace him. It was a powerful curtain, the tragedy perhaps a little unredeemed, but I am always hoping to hear that it is to be produced.

#### GAS-MASKS IN BED.

A Czechoslovakian wife has brought suit for a divorce because her husband insists upon her wearing a gas-mask in bed. His mistake has been to insist crudely and directly and upon political grounds, when he could have gained his point by squaring a beauty doctor and getting the mask prescribed. When the social

historian and contemporary observer enumerates how many strange things, from curling papers to face grease, women have gladly put on their heads and faces to work their magic during the long hours of darkness, this wife, jibbing at a simple gas-mask, seems fully endowed with all the traditional perverseness of her sex. But she may say that the discomfort is not physical but mental, that the reason why a thing is done is the deciding factor which makes it tolerable or intolerable to do it. To put on a mask, as one does readily and expensively in a beauty parlour, in the knowledge that one will awake more like Venus than ever, is a not unpleasant thing; to put on a mask as a last desperate attempt to survive through the night, waiting for the first explosions and the first whips and coils of the poison gas, there is very little fun in that, nor is there any promise that some hours under a hot mask will do anything handsome for the face. "Very well," says the husband, "tempt fortune if you must, but not as my wife."

#### A SLOW-MOVER MOVED.

I cannot help feeling that the arrest of Krilenko for being too fond of chess, mentioned on another and more important page, will have all sorts of repercussions. There used to be people who, when they could find nothing else that was good to say of the Soviet rulers, would say that at any rate they encouraged chess, which Lenin himself used to play at Capri with Mr. Compton Mackenzie.

#### A SAFER AND A BETTER WORLD.

Life is full of compensations, and those who are troubled by the ominous state of the world will be glad to know that one form of suffering known to our fathers is to be unknown not merely to our descendants, but to us ourselves for the rest of our earthly time. In short, a ticket-clipper has been invented which cannot nip the finger of the ticket-holder, however carelessly he presents it. It has a bill like a pelican, and, what is more, it collects all the clipped pieces, which the railway company can then sell as confetti. Time marches on.

#### I SIMPLY CAN'T WRITE UNLESS . . .

A very good instance of modern exaggeration was afforded in a quotation from Binstein, given with much approval by Dean Inge in the *Evening Standard*. The Dean's article, called "Men's Minds Must Be Free," began with remarks about Saint

Thomas More and persecution which suggest the Dean has not profited by the researches of Professor Chambers, and ends up "Einstein who is a prophet in our day, has spoken the truth about intellectual and individual freedom. Without such freedom, there would have been no Shakespeare, no Goethe," and so on. The truth is that Shakespeare lived and wrote under conditions a good deal more severe than the Nazis have yet managed to impose. It is kindergarten history to imagine that the England of Elizabeth and James I was like the France of the Third Republic or the England of George V—a place where a man wrote and printed pretty well whatever he liked. There was immense censorship, immense spying, immense control, and nasty penalties, and Shakespeare is not an argument for the Liberal State, which would have very much amazed him.

#### HOW TO KEEP YOUR FRIENDS.

Editing a paper, which must be classed among the dangerous, if not among the noxious, trades from the point of view of losing friends, makes one turn eagerly to offers of help in the difficult business of staying on good terms with the human race. The other day I was very excited and pleased to read an advertisement heading which said: "Avoid all risk of losing your friends." But the infallible charm, on closer reading, proved to be no more than a letter-weighting machine, complete with weights, whose scrupulous use would save one from understamping letters.

#### A VERY UNRESERVED OCCUPATION.

Here is a somewhat improbable story which I expect began life in the Foreign Office. In a crowded first-class carriage several Army officers were talking, and they eyed askance a young and healthy civilian, and presently fell to passing remarks to each other about what a bad show it was when young fellows got themselves into reserved occupations. They meant to nettle, and they nettled, and when the young man got out, he put his face through the window and said, "For your information, gentlemen, I am in the Foreign Office, and if it hadn't been for chaps like me you would never have had your war at all."

#### WHAT EVERY WOMAN KNOWS.

Said Mrs. Karl Marx: "If only Karl would *make* some capital."



"Madame," said the attendant at the entrance, "you cannot take that dog in with you; it is not permitted."

Lady (most indignantly): "How absurd! What harm can the Movies do to a little dog like this?"

#### THE IMPERTURBABILITY OF THE LONDON POLICE.

This was said by a policeman to a friend of mine, about a fellow policeman's escape: "He formed a preconception that it would prove to be a land mine, and so he retraced his steps."

#### NOT LOOKING A GIFT WAR IN THE MOUTH.

"This is a terrible war," said a Soudanese batman, "a really terrible war: but, of course, it's better than no war at all."

#### ST. ODILE.

The prophecy of St. Odile presents an interesting literary problem. It seems to have made little stir in the last war—Father Hebert Thurston did not mention it in his work "The War and the Prophets"—but it proves much more applicable to this one. The question is, was it written before the last war? I have found in the British Museum the prophecy in a pamphlet issued in Paris in 1916, with copious notes, by a M. Gustave Stoffer. He says in his preface that the French censorship had stopped the publication in 1915, because the prophecy envisaged a war lasting several years, and it was thought that the French, who had been encouraged to think it would end more quickly, would lose heart. In 1916 a prophecy which could be used to suggest victory in 1917 was thought useful. M. Stoffer also says the prophecy was forbidden in Germany. He might be making that up, but I do not think he can have forged the whole document after the last war began, because the prophecy is not very apt for the last war. A forger then would hardly have written that the terrible conqueror would come from the banks of the Danube. No one could think of old Francis Joseph as a great and terrible conqueror. The prophecy is chiefly concerned with German successes on a greater scale than 1914 witnessed, and unless it had been written before Turkey joined Germany it would not have talked about the Crescent and the Cross being reconciled.

#### THE LEGEND OF THE SAINT.

It is pretty clear that St. Odile herself had nothing to do with it, and when she died, in 713, Islam had not become a menace to Europe. She is, herself, a shadowy figure. There is exhaustive

literature about her as the patron of Alsace, and arguments by French and German scholars about the origin and historical worth of her legend. According to the legend, she was born to an important noble, who prayed for a son and was given a blind daughter. She was packed off from the Vosges to Italy. She was baptized when already a young girl and received her sight, and became a famous nun and the foundress of a celebrated convent, the Hohenburg. Because of the legend of her sight, she became a Saint particularly associated with the gift of spiritual and mental illumination, and so a very suitable name for later prophecies, but how much later I have not yet found out. The prophecy seems to me something written quite plainly before the last war, and revised and circulated then because of its promise of eventual German defeat; and it seems to me highly remarkable if it was written at any date before the invention of flying. On internal evidence, I should say it was written in the later middle ages, when the Turks were already recognized as a standing threat, for the Crescent became the Ottomans' sign after 1453.

#### THE PROPHECY.

At any rate, here is the text of her prophecy :

"Listen, listen, O my brother, for I have seen the terror of the forests and the mountains. Fear has frozen the peoples, for never in any region of the universe has such perturbation been witnessed. It is the time when Germania will be called the most belligerent nation on earth. It is the time when there will spring from its womb the terrible warrior who will undertake war on the world, and whom men under arms will call 'Anti-Christ,' he who will be damned by mothers in thousands, crying like Rachel for their children, and refusing consolation because their children no longer live and because all will have been laid waste in their invaded homes.

"The conqueror will come from the banks of the Danube; he will be a remarkable chieftain among all men. The war he will undertake will be the most terrifying that humans have ever undergone—up to the summit of the mountains. His arms will be flamboyant, and the helmets of his soldiers will be topped by points throwing off lightning, as their hands will carry flaming torches. It will be impossible to list the victims of his cruelties. He will win victories on land and sea, and even in the air. Because his winged warriors will be seen, in unbelievable attacks, to rise up to the firmament, there to seize the stars to throw them on towns from one end of the universe to the other and light gigantic

fires. Nations will be stunned and will exclaim : 'Whence comes his strength ? How has he been able to undertake such a war ?'

"The earth will rock with the shock of the combats ; rivers will flow red with blood, and the marine monsters themselves will flee in terror to the bottom of the oceans, while bleak tempests will spread desolation everywhere. Future generations will be astonished that his strong and numerous enemies were able to stop the march of his victories. And the war will be very long, and the conqueror will have attained the apex of his triumphs about the middle of the sixth month of the second year of hostilities. It will be the end of the period of bloody victories. In the flush of his victories he will say : 'Accept the yoke of my domination.' But his enemies will not submit in any way, and the war will continue. And he will cry : 'Misfortune will befall them, because I am their conqueror.'

"The second part of the war will equal in length the half of the first : it will be known as the period of decline. It will be full of surprises that will cause the people of the world to quake, particularly when twenty opposing nations take part in the war. About half way through this period, the small nations submitted to the conqueror will plead : 'Give us peace, give us peace.' But there will be no peace for these people. This will not be the end of these wars, but the beginning of the end, when hand to hand fighting will take place in the citadel of citadels. It is then that there will be revolts among the women of his own country, who will want to stone him. But also prodigious things will be done in the Orient. The Crescent and the Cross will be reunited.

"The third period will be of the shortest duration, and the victor will have lost confidence in his warriors. This will be called period of invasion, because the country of the conqueror will be invaded in all parts and laid waste in just retribution for injustices and his ungodliness. Around the mountain torrents blood will flow. It will be the last battle. Nations will sing their hymns of thanksgiving in the temples of God, and will thank Him for their deliverance, because there will have appeared the warrior who will disperse the troops of the victor, whose armies will be decimated by an unknown and great illness. This malady will discourage the hearts of his soldiers, while the nations will say : 'The finger of God is there. It is just punishment.' The people will believe that his end is near, the sceptre will change hands and my people will rejoice. Because God is just---while sometimes allowing cruelty and depredations---all the spoliated people who will have believed in Him will recover what they have

lost and something additional as a reward on earth. Countless regions where all was fired and made bloody will be saved in a providential manner by their heroic defenders. The region of Lutetia will itself be saved because of its blessed mountains and its pious women, although everyone will have believed it doomed. Then the people will go to the mountain and offer thanks to God. Because men will have seen such terrible abominations in this war that their generations will never want more of it."